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Framing the News:
Deutsche Welle, Sputnik News, and Macedonia's Colorful Revolution

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Abstract

Framing the News: Deutsche Welle, Sputnik News, and Macedonia's Colorful Revolution

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State-owned international broadcasters have since World War II been a fundamental part of a country's public diplomacy and broader foreign policy efforts. These broadcasters not only serve to present a country's position to the world, but actively frame the way unfolding current events are seen by the public. Despite the dominance of social media today – international broadcasters have in the past decade seen an expansion in their audience reach as well as an increase in their funding. This research examines how Germany's Deutsche Welle (DW) and Russia's Sputnik News (SN) framed the 2016 pro-democracy protests in Macedonia that came to known as the "Colorful Revolution." While it is no surprise that this research found both DW and SN framed the Macedonian protests in line with their respective government's policies – how they framed them differed. The use of particular framing devices (subtle and direct), the repetition of certain topics and the omission of others, as well as the intertextual links to prior news texts showcase the specific methods by which Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News framed the Colorful Revolution. This research found that DW utilized (1) a domestic crisis frame in English-language reporting, (2) a divided country frame in Macedonian-language reporting, and (3) a rule of law frame in both English and Macedonian. SN, on the other hand, utilized (1) a foreign meddling frame, (2) an ethnic conflict and regional destabilization frame, and (3) a law and order frame in both English and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian. Deutsche Welle's frames were targeted based on the perceived audience – an English speaking and international audience as well as a local Macedonian speaking audience. On the other hand, Sputnik News utilized both international and locally salient discourses in both its English and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language editions. Further research is needed that explores the news production of frames as well as the framing effects in order to holistically understand what role Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News play in framing international events.

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Introduction

The twenty-first century has seen the spread of two coalescing phenomena – the rise of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the globalization of protest. As we have entered the “information age” the role of the media and the competition over information has garnered greater attention among academics and policymakers alike. Similarly, as causes such as democracy, the fight against inequality, and human rights have gained traction so too have protest movements seeking to address them. The intersection of these different phenomena – largely focused on social media platforms and their use by both protesters and governments – has seen an explosion in scholarly research. However, much less academic inquiry has been afforded to the role of state-owned international broadcasters – institutions which came of age in the twentieth century during World War II and endured throughout the Cold War – and how they have adapted to this new information age. This research seeks to fill that gap by exploring how two state-owned international broadcasters – Germany’s Deutsche Welle (DW) and Russia’s Sputnik News (SN) – reported on the 2016 pro-democracy protests in Macedonia which came to be known as the “Colorful Revolution.”

In particular, this research asks: how did Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News frame Macedonia’s Colorful Revolution and what narratives did they promote in their online coverage of the protests? Furthermore, this work compares the frames present in each broadcaster’s reporting with the official statements (such as press releases, interviews, speeches, etc.) of the German and Russian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and their respective embassies in Skopje. While both broadcasters frame the protests in Macedonia in line with their respective government – they do so differently. Deutsche Welle eschews the use of opinion pieces and commentaries whereas Sputnik News embraces them in

furthering certain frames. Both cover the protests themselves, but while DW focuses on what initiated them, SN skips over these details and focuses on arguing that the protests are tearing apart Macedonia's legal order. Deutsche Welle remains strict in its framing by targeting its discourse depending on whether an article is written in English and aimed at an international audience or if it is in Macedonian and honed in on local issues. Sputnik News, on the other hand, blends locally salient discourses into its framing in English despite the lack of relevance to an international audience.

The remainder of this thesis will be presented as follows. First, a methodological section will review concepts such as critical discourse analysis, various aspects framing theory, and the notion of intertextuality. This will be followed by a case selection section which presents why Deutsche Welle, Sputnik News, and the events surrounding Macedonia's Colorful Revolution were selected for analysis. The section will also describe how the state-owned international broadcasters see themselves and what scholars have written about their activities. The next section, a brief literature review, will review scholarly work on the media, public diplomacy and international broadcasting, as well as work written on the intersection of the news media and protests. Following the literature review the thesis will provide a brief background section looking at German and Russian interests in Macedonia as well as the events leading to the Colorful Revolution. The thesis will then go into an analysis section and unpack the news frames in DW's English-language reporting, DW's Macedonian-language reporting, DW's opinion pieces in both languages, and then compare the frames in DW's reporting with statements made by German government officials regarding the protest in Macedonia. The analysis section will move on to look at the frames in both Sputnik News' English and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS) language reporting, discuss the opinion pieces in SN's reporting, and finally compare the frames with statements from Russian government officials. Following the

analysis, the thesis will make a comparative analysis between the news frames of both DW and SN in their coverage of the Colorful Revolution. The thesis will then end with a conclusion as well as discuss the relevance of this work to policymakers and areas for potential future academic research.

Methodology

To accomplish the goals of this research, this study will employ the concept of framing from media and communication studies as well as utilize a content analysis and critical discourse analysis of Deutsche Welle and Spunk News' online news stories. The stories will be reviewed to unpack the news frames manifest in the reporting on Macedonia's Colorful Revolution. These news stories feature regular news texts of current events, videos, podcasts, as well as opinion pieces and commentary by guest authors or members of the news staff. A qualitative analysis of the news texts, detailing the frames utilized by DW and SN, will be accompanied by a review of their opinion pieces and a comparison of the news frames with statements from German and Russian officials regarding the protests in Macedonia.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

As noted, this research will rely on critical discourse analysis – as well content and discourse analyses – to explore the news texts produced by Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News regarding Macedonia's Colorful Revolution. As James Watson notes, discourse analysis emphasizes how news media, through “linguistic patterns, word and phrase selection (lexical choices), grammatical constructions and story coherence” present the world to consumers of news.¹ Content analysis, on the other hand, is more comparative in nature exploring discursive similarities and differences across news texts, multiple news outlets, and across a number of countries. However, unlike discourse analysis which focuses on analyzing the semiotics within a text – critical discourse analysis strives to go

¹ James Watson, *Dictionary of Media and Communication Studies*, Ninth edition (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 82.

beyond the linguistics and understand the social and political implications intertwined with the written word.

As Norman Fairclough has argued, critical discourse analysis intentionally examines not only the news texts, but “(a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes;” in order to make sense of “how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power.”² As such, the notion of discourse is not merely text or speech, but something which has agency itself. As communications and media scholar Teun A. van Dijk has described:

Discourse is no longer just an ‘intervening variable’ between media institutions or journalists on the one hand, and the audience on the other hand, but also studies in its own right, and as a central and manifest cultural and social product in and through which meanings and ideologies are expressed or (re-) produced...³

These sorts of critical discourse analyses have become standard practice in sociology, linguistic anthropology, and more recently in media and communication studies and political science. Having this in mind, to analyze media discourse, Anabela Carvalho has suggested a broad framework that incorporates both textual and contextual analysis. Textual analysis examines (1) layout and structural organization, (2) objects, (3) actors, (4) languages, grammar and rhetoric, (5) discursive strategies, and (6) ideological standpoints while contextual analysis incorporates (1) comparative-synchronic analysis and (2) historical-diachronic analysis.⁴ Such a comprehensive method of analyzing both the news

² Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, Language in Social Life Series (London ; Longman, 1995), 132.

³ Teun A. Van Dijk, *Discourse and Communication: New Approaches to the Analysis of Mass Media Discourse and Communication*, vol. 10 (Berlin, New York: DE GRUYTER, 1985), 5.

⁴ Anabela Carvalho, “Media(Ted) Discourse and Society,” *Journalism Studies* 9, no. 2 (April 2008): 167–72.

text as well as the broader context within which it is produced is necessary to understand how news media frame events.

FRAMING

A related concept (and form of analysis) which has gained traction in media and communication studies is that of “framing.” Erving Goffman, in his 1974 sociological work *Framing Analysis*, originally contributed to the notion of a frame describing it as a “schemata of interpretation” used to “locate, perceive, identify, and label” various aspects of everyday life.⁵ As the concept of a frame transitioned from sociology into the media and communications studies field it garnered new meaning. Todd Gitlin, in his seminal work from 1980, emphasized frames as “... principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters.”⁶ Similarly, William Gamson and Andre Modigliani describe a frame as “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events.”⁷ More recently, Stephen Reese argued that frames can be seen “as structures that draw boundaries, set up categories, define some ideas as out and others in, and generally operate to snag related ideas in their net in an active process.”⁸ Due to the interdisciplinary nature of framing, and frames themselves, a plethora of definitions have emerged.

However, Robert M. Entman’s conceptualization of framing is among the most detailed and prominently cited. Entman offers a more operationalizable definition of

⁵ Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 21.

⁶ Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 6.

⁷ William Gamson and Andre Modigliani, “The Changing Culture of Affirmative Action,” *Research in Political Sociology* 3 (1987): 137–177.

⁸ Stephen D. Reese, “The Framing Project: A Bridging Model for Media Research Revisited,” *Journal of Communication* 57, no. 1 (March 2007): 150.

framing which makes it most applicable to the goals of this research. As Entman describes: “Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text...”⁹ As such, according to Entman, frames do the following:

...(1) define problems – determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values; (2) diagnose causes – identify the forces creating the problem; (3) make moral judgments – evaluate causal agents and their effects; and (4) suggest remedies – offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects.

In order to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgements, and suggest remedies – the frames themselves are “...manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments...” Other scholars, such as Gamson and Modigliani, have referred to these as “framing devices” and can include “(1) metaphors, (2) exemplars (i.e., historical examples from which lessons are drawn), (3) catchphrases, (4) depictions, and (5) visual images (e.g., icons).”¹⁰ The variety of these devices and their subtle (or intentional) incorporation into a news text is what makes critical discourse analysis so important in explaining the subtleties present within a text.

As an overall field, framing research in media and communications studies has been divided into three major categories. Research that examines news production and the creation of frames (by journalists, political actors, and others – often referred to as “frame sponsors”), the frames themselves as they exist in news texts, and finally how the frames are received by an audience and their subsequent cognitive impacts (i.e. “framing effects”). This research is primarily focused with analyzing the news frames themselves as they are

⁹ Robert M. Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm,” *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993): 52–53.

¹⁰ William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, “Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach,” *American Journal of Sociology* 95, no. 1 (1989): 1–37.

utilized in the news texts published by Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News. While this study is not interested in either the specifics of the production of the news frames nor does it seek to analyze the public reception and cognitive effects of those frames – it is important to note the role of the frame sponsor and how that relates to ideas about public diplomacy and international broadcasting which will be discussed in the literature review.

FRAME SPONSORS

Research by Herbert Gans, Gale Tuchman, and other scholars studying news production and news construction discuss how news frames are often created unconsciously by journalists seeking to present current events to the broader public.¹¹ In this line of research, there is consensus that journalists, editors, or even news organizations themselves create frames, whether as a “mental model” to simplify the news to readers or for other reasons, and thus serve as frame sponsors. Aside from this internal framing, i.e. that emerging from within the news organization itself, there may also be an outside factor influencing how journalists report the news. The assumption is that rather than those crafting the news text (journalists and editors) – someone else – an elected official, business corporation, or other party with a vested interest, influences the process in order to frame the news event in a particular manner. Baldwin Van Gorp notes that, with

... news conferences or government statements, certain sponsors of a particular frame... may strategically try to convince the media to cover a situation in accordance with ‘their’ frame, that is, by prior strategic decision making regarding the manner in which they will announce their viewpoints.¹²

¹¹ Gale Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978); Herbert J. Gans, *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time*, 1st Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1980); Peter Golding, *Making the News*, 1st ed. (London ; Longman, 1979); W. Russell Neuman, *Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Political Meaning*, American Politics and Political Economy Series (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

¹² Baldwin Van Gorp, “The Constructionist Approach to Framing: Bringing Culture Back In,” *Journal of Communication* 57, no. 1 (March 2007): 68.

As such, there are no frameless news stories, but rather questions as to who gets to decide the news frame and for what reasons. This notion of frame sponsors is important in the case of international broadcasters such as Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News because while these institutions formally adhere to journalistic standards and ethics, they are nonetheless state sponsored. As such, intentionally or not these broadcasters have an agenda with which they are tasked. DW and SN, unlike private media organizations, not only report the news but play an active part in their respective country's public diplomacy efforts. In other words, they have a specific role within the broader news media environment that has been delegated to them by the relevant authorities. Ultimately, as Van Gorp contends, "press releases provided by frame sponsors and whose purpose is to convince the receiver as much as to inform them, the choice of frame is quite deliberate."¹³ As such, the news frames in Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News' reporting are not just unconscious efforts to present a certain reality, but conscious attempts to create a reality in line with the foreign policy objectives of their respective state.

INTERTEXTUALITY

Finally, it is also important to bring in the concept of intertextuality. Emerging in the fields of sociology and linguistic anthropology, Mikhail Bakhtin initially described the concept as heteroglossia, noting that language:

... represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present... These 'languages' of heteroglossia intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying 'languages.'¹⁴

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Mikhail M. Bakhtin and Michael Holquist, *Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 291.

The notion as described by Bakhtin is that language is not only a social construct but tied to previous uses of language. Norman Fairclough has applied this conceptualization of language to text and argues that intertextuality is “the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth.”¹⁵ Thus, news texts can similarly be seen as products which “echo” previous news texts as well as the broader historical and sociopolitical reality in which they are formed. Certain notions, catchphrases, images, syntax, and other framing devices within one news text may relate to those same or similar framing devices used in a prior news text in turn creating a conscious or unconscious chain between the texts.

As Robert Entman and his colleagues have noted, “a framing message has particular cultural resonance; it calls to mind currently congruent elements of schemas that were stored in the past...”¹⁶ This connection across multiple texts and over time lies at the crux of intertextuality. These intertextual connections between news texts are important in analyzing some of the semiotics and references present in Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News’ reporting of the Colorful Revolution in Macedonia. In particular, both DW and SN frame the Colorful Revolution while utilizing discourses, metaphors, and descriptions informed by prior protests and their sociopolitical context; that is, they intertextually appropriate the reporting and narratives from the past (in both English, but also local languages) to frame the present.

As Christian Baden summarizes, “[n]ews texts contain references to events, issues, actors, and considerations from prior news and use framing devices and identity chains in

¹⁵ Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge, Mass: Polity Press, 1992), 84.

¹⁶ Robert M. Entman, Jörg Matthes, and Lynn Pellicano, “Nature, Sources, and Effects of News Framing,” in *The Handbook of Journalism Studies* (New York, United States: Taylor & Francis Group, 2008), 177.

order to mark and retrieve additional information required for the frame.”¹⁷ This gives frames a certain potency in their implementation as they tap into recent histories, memories, and emotions. As such, it will be crucial to review recent Macedonian history leading to the Colorful Revolution as well as German and Russian interests in Macedonia, in order to make sense of the news texts produced by Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News. Before doing that, it is important to note why these two broadcasters and the 2016 pro-democracy protests in Macedonia were selected for analysis.

¹⁷ Christian Baden, “Reconstructing Frames from Intertextual News Discourse: A Semantic Network Approach to News Framing Analysis,” in *Doing News Framing Analysis II* (Routledge, 2018), 3–15.

Case Selection

The reasons for selecting these two international broadcasters and examining their reporting of Macedonia's Colorful Revolution are numerous. First, both international broadcasters – Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News – offer an English-language edition as well as local language editions (Macedonian and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian). This means that the broadcaster, in reporting on current events, targets both an international English-speaking audience as well as a local language speaking audience in Macedonia and the broader Balkan region. This allows the study to explore differences between the reporting in the different languages. In fact, Sputnik News utilizes the same news frames in both English and BCS whereas Deutsche Welle has different news frames in English than it does in Macedonian (although with some overlap).

Second, in the past ten years, both Germany (as a major player in the European Union) and Russia have increased their political and economic activities in Macedonia and across the Balkans. As such their foreign policies, an aspect of which is public diplomacy and the work of their international broadcasters, are vested in the region. The United States played an active role in the region, particularly during the wars in the 1990s, but has since become less involved and passed the mantle of upholding regional peace and stability in the Balkans to the European Union.¹⁸ American international broadcasters such as Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty were potential sources of analysis for this study. However, Voice of America's mission is more focused on presenting America and the American's perspective to the world much like how Russia's RT network is focused on presenting Russia to the world.¹⁹ Furthermore, Radio Free Europe/Radio

¹⁸ Jasmin Mujanovic, "The Euro-Atlantic Project Is Ending in the Balkans," *Balkan Insight*, December 13, 2016, <https://balkaninsight.com/2016/12/13/the-euro-atlantic-project-is-ending-in-the-balkans-12-13-2016/>.

¹⁹ Alan L. Heil, *Voice of America: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

Liberty and their reporters on the ground in Macedonia and elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia were set up to serve as surrogate news outlets during the 1990s and early 2000s when independent media in the region struggled to survive.²⁰ Thus, their mission and structure as news organizations is different than that of Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News. As such, this research decided to exclude these two American broadcasters from analysis.

Other states, such as Turkey and Qatar, have also set up regionally focused international broadcasting networks in the Balkans. Turkey's Anadolu Agency provides coverage in English, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, and Macedonian.²¹ However, their reporting on Macedonia's Colorful Revolution was sparse and as such excluded from analysis. Similarly, Qatar's Al Jazeera network, known for its extensive coverage of world affairs in English also set up a regional television network based in Sarajevo – known as Al Jazeera Balkans – that operates in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian.²² However, the reporting of the English-language edition of Al Jazeera was, like that of Turkey's Anadolu, rather limited and thus did not provide enough content for a proper comparative analysis. It is worth noting this lack of coverage by Anadolu Agency and Al Jazeera as it may be an indicator of the relative level of interest these two countries have in engaging in international broadcasting efforts in the Balkans. This is, however, beyond the scope of this research.

Third, Macedonia's 2016 protests garnered international attention with reporting in major news outlets such as the BBC, CNN, Washington Post, and the New York Times.

²⁰ Sig Mickelson, *America's Other Voice: The Story of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (New York, NY : Praeger, 1983); Nicholas John Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge ; Cambridge University Press, 2008).

²¹ "History," Anadolu Agency, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/p/history>.

²² "O nama [About us]," Al Jazeera Balkans, <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/o-nama>; "Al Jazeera Starts Balkans Channel," *BBC News*, November 11, 2011, sec. Europe, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-15701549>.

As such, the protests were portrayed in international reporting from a geopolitical lens. In particular, the Colorful Revolution protests for many international observers were a turning point in whether Macedonia would continue to slide away from its Euro-Atlantic aspirations and look east toward Russia or whether the country would return on a more democratic path toward integration into the European Union. Thus, the way in which both international broadcasters, Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News, reported on the situation was influenced by this geopolitical discourse emerging from the broader international media environment. Finally, it is important to note that Deutsche Welle is an established international broadcaster that has been around for decades. Sputnik News, on the other hand, formed out of the remnants of Russia and the Soviet Union's former international broadcasting efforts has not existed for even a decade. To better understand the distinctions between the two broadcasters it is important to take a deeper dive into their structures and missions.

DEUTSCHE WELLE

According to Deutsche Welle's website, they are "Germany's international broadcaster and one of the most successful and relevant international media outlets" with reporting in more than 30 languages that attracts hundreds of millions of viewers. Founded in 1953, DW is formally "a non-profit, public broadcasting institution for foreign broadcasting" which is federally financed through German taxpayers. As Anke Fiedler and Marie-Soleil Frère note in their research on the international broadcaster, with the "Deutsche Welle-Act, passed by the German Bundestag in the autumn of 2004, DW... has

the ‘legal capacity and the right to be self-governing.’”²³ Oliver Zöllner elaborates on this legal framework in his own research, arguing that:

DW is designed to remain editorially independent; a status which is ensured by an elaborate system of regular parliamentary accords. The broadcaster is therefore not institutionalized as a government agency (VOA type) but as an autonomous public corporation (BBC model), which of course implies a well-established practice of autonomy limited by and within the overlapping societal subsystems of media and politics.²⁴

Thus, in comparison with other international broadcasters receiving state funding, Deutsche Welle is considered among the premier institutions to have established not only formal editorial independence, but also relative institutional independence. within the German state apparatus. Thus, DW has proactively attempted to eschew any perceptions that it is a direct mouthpiece of the German government. Regardless, the goals of DW as a media organization (as defined in the Deutsche Welle Act) and those of Germany’s foreign policy often coalesce and work in tandem considering that DW is ultimately part of Germany’s public diplomacy efforts.

Deutsche Welle’s website openly states that their “aim is to foster a peaceful, stable global community” by focusing on issues including “freedom and human rights, democracy and good governance, free trade and social justice, health education and environmental protection, technology and innovation.”²⁵ DW notes that their broadcasts are targeted “...to young people, to opinion leaders, to those actively involved in public debate, and to everyone striving to understand what is happening in the world...”²⁶ As the analysis section of this research will show – these goals manifest themselves in the news

²³ Anke Fiedler and Marie-Soleil Frère, “‘Radio France Internationale’ and ‘Deutsche Welle’ in Francophone Africa: International Broadcasters in a Time of Change,” *Communication, Culture & Critique* 9, no. 1 (2016): 80.

²⁴ Oliver Zöllner, “A Quest for Dialogue in International Broadcasting: Germany’s Public Diplomacy Targeting Arab Audiences,” *Global Media and Communication* 2, no. 2 (August 1, 2006): 170.

²⁵ “Profile,” Deutsche Welle, <https://www.dw.com/en/about-dw/profile/s-30688>.

²⁶ Ibid

frames of DW's reporting on the protests in Macedonia through a focus on issues around freedom, human rights, democracy, good governance, and youth. The spread of these normative (Western) values are ultimately part of Germany as well as the EU's broader foreign policy objectives.

DW first began broadcasting to the Balkans in the 1960s during the Cold War. Serbo-Croatian radio broadcasting started in 1962 and ran until 1992 before being rebranded into Serbian and Croatian respectively.²⁷ Macedonian-language broadcasting started in 1969 and has since continued.²⁸ DW's Macedonian service operates mainly through online news published via the broadcaster's website and is headed by a single person based in Germany with several freelance journalists in Macedonia. Unlike DW, Sputnik News does not have a Macedonian-language edition, but just a Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian edition for the entire Balkan region.

SPUTNIK NEWS

Sputnik News emerged online in 2014 with the closure and merger of Russia's RIA Novosti and Voice of Russia outlets under the umbrella of Rossiya Segodnya.²⁹ RIA Novosti launched during the Second World War and survived in various forms until becoming Russia's state-owned international news outlet with the end of the Cold War. Similarly, Voice of Russia, previously Radio Moscow, operated as the USSR and Russia's state-owned international radio service. Sputnik News describes itself as "a modern news agency whose products include newsfeeds, websites, social networks, mobile apps, radio broadcasts and multimedia press centers" that "covers global political and economic news

²⁷ "1960-1964," Deutsche Welle,, <https://www.dw.com/en/1960-1964/a-326452-1>.

²⁸ "1965-1969," Deutsche Welle, <https://www.dw.com/en/1965-1969/a-326466-1>.

²⁹ Ben Nimmo, "Sputnik. Propaganda in a New Orbit: Information Warfare Initiative Paper No. 2," Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), January 2016.

targeting an international audience.”³⁰ Like Deutsche Welle, Sputnik News also offers online news in a wide variety of languages including Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, but not Macedonian. This is likely due to the present political ties between Russia and Serbia as well as the dominance of the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language in the former Yugoslav region (i.e. being intelligible to many Macedonian speakers).

Considering Sputnik News’ nascence there have not been many scholarly analyses of the broadcaster as is the case with Deutsche Welle. Some scholars have argued that SN, like DW, serves as a tool of public diplomacy. As Sinikukka Saari has argued, in the aftermath of the color revolutions in many of Russia’s neighbors, increased public diplomacy and other efforts to manage the information space were given high priority by Russia’s foreign policy elites.³¹ In the lead-up to the formation of Sputnik News, Saari notes that there was “a substantial increase in the funding for and complete modernization of the RIA Novosti News Agency.”³² In this regard, as is the case with Deutsche Welle, Evan Potter has argued that Sputnik News “should be seen through the lens of a more holistic understanding of the role and function of a nation’s public diplomacy in the management of global public perceptions.”³³

However, other scholars looking at Sputnik News have argued the institution serves for Russian propaganda purposes which blurs the line with traditional public diplomacy.³⁴ Martin Kragh and Sebastian Åsberg, in their work on Sputnik News’ brief activities in Sweden, argue that Sputnik News:

³⁰ “About Us,” Sputnik News, <https://sputniknews.com/docs/about/index.html>.

³¹ Sinikukka Saari, “Russia’s Post-Orange Revolution Strategies to Increase Its Influence in Former Soviet Republics: Public Diplomacy Po Russkii,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 66, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): 51.

³² Ibid, 55.

³³ Evan H. Potter, “Russia’s Strategy for Perception Management through Public Diplomacy and Influence Operations: The Canadian Case,” *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 14, no. 4 (2019): 405.

³⁴ Gary D. Rawnsley, “To Know Us Is to Love Us: Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting in Contemporary Russia and China,” *Politics* 35, no. 3–4 (November 1, 2015): 274.

...regularly published articles pandering to pet-narratives with potential target groups, such as NATO expansion... and the chaos in Europe in the wake of the migration crisis... By targeting different groups with pre-existing... anti-NATO/EU sentiments, Sputnik can be said to have operated on the premise that these sentiments could be ‘nudged’, that is, further strengthened.³⁵

By “nudge,” the scholars are referring to Andrew Wilson’s description of Russian propaganda as operationalized “...by finding parties, politicians, and points-of-view that are already sure of their world-view rather than confused, and giving them a nudge...”³⁶ Other scholars have further argued, in line with Kragh and Åsberg, that SN is not just an element of Russia’s public diplomacy, but has an actively propagandist agenda. In this vein, some scholars have noted that Sputnik News can be seen as the use of “sharp power” i.e. they “...are not necessarily seeking to 'win hearts and minds,' the common frame of reference for soft power efforts, but they are surely seeking to manipulate their target audiences by distorting the information that reaches them.”³⁷

Regardless, this research does not attempt to engage the theoretical debate regarding the differences between propaganda and public diplomacy. Instead, it views both DW and SN as elements of Germany and Russia’s respective broader public diplomacy efforts. In order to extrapolate the intricate connections between the news texts, their production within a state-owned news organization, and the broader socio-political context – it is important to look at scholarly work related to news media, public diplomacy and international broadcasting, and protest movements.

³⁵ Martin Kragh and Sebastian Åsberg, “Russia’s Strategy for Influence through Public Diplomacy and Active Measures: The Swedish Case,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 40, no. 6 (2017): 16-17.

³⁶ Andrew Wilson, “Four Types of Russian Propaganda,” *Aspen Review*, 2015, <https://www.aspenreview.com/article/2017/four-types-of-russian-propaganda/>.

³⁷ Potter, “Russia’s Strategy,” 414.; Juan Pablo Cardenal et al., “‘Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influence’” (International Forum for Democratic Studies, December 5, 2017), <https://www.ned.org/sharp-power-rising-authoritarian-influence-forum-report/>.

Literature Review

This section will explore the literature on public diplomacy and international broadcasting as well as the intersection of news media and protests. Studies of news media and news organizations have narrowed in on the important fact that the news is not an objective reality that is reported, but rather something which news organizations themselves (as well as other participants) actively create. As Roger Fowler has written,

...the 'content' of newspapers is not facts... language is not neutral, but a highly constructive mediator... news is a practice: a discourse which, far from neutrally reflecting social reality and empirical facts, intervenes in... 'the social construction of reality'.³⁸

In this vein, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's famed *Manufacturing Consent* exploring American private media is a seminal work outlining how private news organizations are beholden to certain vested interests – bureaucratic, political, business, and others.³⁹ Despite such research, the literature on news media as well as journalists has shown that their own perception of their roles revolves around “reporting the truth” and serving as the “fourth estate.”⁴⁰ These contradictions between the public's general belief that news is supposed to be objective truth and the fact that it is a layered and complex construction of reality has been an arena of scholarly debate for decades. However, much less scholarly analysis has explored these issues and their relation to state-owned international broadcasters.

³⁸ Roger Fowler, *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press* (Routledge, 2013), 1.

³⁹ Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).

⁴⁰ Julianne Schultz, *Reviving the Fourth Estate: Democracy, Accountability, and the Media*, Reshaping Australian Institutions (Cambridge, UK; Cambridge University Press, 1998).

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING

Unlike private news media, state-owned international broadcasters (such as Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News) are media institutions of a different kind. Their role goes beyond the private media's mythical mission of "objectively reporting the news" and is intricately tied with the public diplomacy efforts of their respective countries. As Jarol Manheim has argued, public diplomacy refers to "... efforts by the government of one nation to influence public or elite opinion in a second nation for the purpose of turning the foreign policy of the target nation to advantage."⁴¹ Scholars have argued that these activities are components of a country's broader foreign policy efforts and are focused on direct connections with the citizens of another country. Paul Sharp has similarly referred to public diplomacy as "...the process by which direct relations with people in a country are pursued to advance the interests and extend the values of those being represented."⁴² More recently, scholars have tied public diplomacy to Joseph Nye's conceptualization of "soft power." Nye first referred to soft power arguing that "... when one country gets other countries to want what it wants might be called co-optive or soft power in contrast with the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants."⁴³ Nye has since connected his idea of soft power directly to public diplomacy noting that "public diplomacy is an instrument that governments use to mobilize these resources to communicate with and attract the publics of other countries, rather than merely their governments. Public

⁴¹ Jarol B. Manheim, *Strategic Public Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy: The Evolution of Influence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4.

⁴² Paul Sharp, "Revolutionary States, Outlaw Regimes and the Techniques of Public Diplomacy," in *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, Studies in Diplomacy and International Relations (Palgrave Macmillan Limited, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 106–23.

⁴³ Joseph S. Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, Pbk. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

diplomacy tries to attract ... broadcasting, subsidizing cultural exports, arranging exchanges, and so forth.”⁴⁴

In a similar vein, renowned public diplomacy scholar Nicholas Cull has highlighted that there are multiple aspects to public diplomacy. In particular, Cull notes “(1) listening, (2) advocacy, (3) cultural diplomacy, (4) exchange, and (5) international broadcasting.”⁴⁵ Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News, as international broadcasters, can be seen as the communicative arm of public diplomacy efforts seeking direct interaction with a foreign country’s public. As Cull has described, international broadcasting (IB):

... is an actor’s attempt to manage the international environment by using the technologies of radio, television, and the Internet to engage with foreign publics. IB work as practiced by states can overlap with all the other public diplomacy functions including listening in the monitoring/audience research functions, advocacy/ information work in editorials or policy broadcasts, cultural diplomacy in its cultural content, and exchange in exchanges of programming and personnel with other broadcasters.⁴⁶

Similarly, Monroe Price and his colleagues have argued that “international broadcasting has been the elegant term for a complex combination of state sponsored news, information, and entertainment directed at a population outside the sponsoring state’s boundaries.”⁴⁷

A particularly crucial issue for international broadcasting is that of credibility. As O’Keeffe and Oliver argue, “... the prerequisite for a successful international broadcaster is credibility, and this is earned only if a broadcaster operates with complete editorial

⁴⁴ Joseph S. Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 95.

⁴⁵ Nicholas J. Cull, “Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 31.

⁴⁶ Cull, “Public Diplomacy,” 34.

⁴⁷ Monroe E. Price, Susan Haas, and Drew Margolin, “New Technologies and International Broadcasting: Reflections on Adaptations and Transformations,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 152-153.

independence from its funding government.”⁴⁸ In other words, international broadcasters while serving as a mechanism of their state’s public diplomacy efforts, must be seen as independent news institutions in line with the highest journalistic ethics and standards. If they are not, then their effectiveness is diminished or they are labeled as sources of propaganda. Nye has similarly noted that, “Skeptics who treat the term public diplomacy as a mere euphemism for propaganda miss the point. Simple propaganda often lacks credibility and thus is counterproductive as public diplomacy. Good public diplomacy has to go beyond propaganda.”⁴⁹ Credibility becomes particularly important when news organizations, but especially international broadcasters, cover events such as protests taking place in a foreign country.

MEDIA AND PROTESTS

There is a strand of academic inquiry in the social movement and protest studies fields as well as the framing and media studies literature that attempts to link the two issues. In particular, the social movement studies field has examined how protesters engage the news media as part of their mobilization around specific social issues. In other words, how do protesters and social movements frame themselves and their concerns in order to get media attention for their cause with the hope that this will lead to public support. The protesters can be viewed as frame sponsors attempting to influence the news media. As Robert Benford and David Snow have argued, protesters are “viewed as signifying agents actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents,

⁴⁸ Annmaree O’Keeffe and Alex Oliver, “International Broadcasting and Its Contribution to Public Diplomacy” (Sydney, Australia: Lowy Institute, September 2010), 6, https://archive.loyyinstitute.org/publications/international-broadcasting-and-its-contribution-public-diplomacy#section_5956.

⁴⁹ Nye, “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” 101.

antagonists, and bystanders or observers.”⁵⁰ However, protesters and social movements typically come up against resistance as they try to frame their cause. Scholars have described what is known as a “protest paradigm” in which the news media instead give preferential treatment to the status quo or mainstream and in turn marginalize the protests, seen as errant, in their reporting. McLeod and Detenber note that:

The set of common characteristics that articulate this support have been codified into the concept of the “protest paradigm” ..., which provides a template for the construction of a protest story. McLeod and Hertog (1998) classified characteristics of the protest paradigm into the following categories: narrative structures; reliance on official sources and official definitions; the invocation of public opinion; and other techniques of delegitimation, marginalization, and demonization.⁵¹

The narrative structures in the paradigm relate to established frames that are utilized when covering protests. Examples of such frames include confrontation between police and protesters, rioting, a violence frame, and others which tend to paint a negative image of protesters. The paradigm also has an overabundance of sourcing from officials (such as government and the police) as this is standard journalistic practice. Again, this favors the status quo of those in position of power over the protesters. The incorporation of public opinion into the paradigm relates to the way journalists invoke bystanders or onlookers in order to “communicate the deviance of protesters by depicting them as an isolated minority.”⁵² Finally, references to protesters’ “appearance, language, beliefs, and goals” among other linguistic tactics in reporting are used to delegitimize, marginalize, or demonize their efforts.

There have been a range of studies that have explored news media framing of protests such as the 1968 Democratic Convention protests, anti-war and anti-nuclear

⁵⁰ Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 613.

⁵¹ D. M. McLeod and B. H. Detenber, “Framing Effects of Television News Coverage of Social Protest,” *Journal of Communication* 49, no. 3 (1999): 5.

⁵² Ibid 6.

protests in the U.S. and elsewhere, the Tiananmen protests, and the global justice movement in the 1990s.⁵³ This literature showcases how the media engage in the protest paradigm. Furthermore, these studies show that private media, when reporting on international news, often like international broadcasters, still toe the line of their respective government's official policy.

More recent research has also explored media framing and protests such as Occupy Wall Street, the Indignados movements in Spain and Greece, the Egyptian Revolution, the Arab Spring protests, the 2013 anti-austerity protests in Cyprus, the Gezi Park protests in Turkey, and Thailand's 2014 elections crisis.⁵⁴ The latest trends in this research have seen

⁵³ Michael P. Boyle et al., "Newspapers and Protest: An Examination of Protest Coverage from 1960 to 1999," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 82, no. 3 (September 1, 2005): 638–53.; James K. Hertog and Douglas M. McLeod, "Anarchists Wreak Havoc in Downtown Minneapolis: A Multi-Level Study of Media Coverage of Radical Protest," *Journalism & Mass Communication Monographs*, no. 151 (1995): 1–25.; Monica Brasted, "Framing Protest: The Chicago Tribune and the New York Times during the 1968 Democratic Convention," *Atlantic Journal of Communication* 13, no. 1 (March 2005): 1–25.; Zengjun Peng, "Framing the Anti-War Protests in the Global Village: A Comparative Study of Newspaper Coverage in Three Countries," *International Communication Gazette* 70, no. 5 (October 1, 2008): 361–77.; Frank E. Dardis, "Marginalization Devices in U.S. Press Coverage of Iraq War Protest: A Content Analysis," *Mass Communication & Society* 9, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 117–35.; Alice Holmes Cooper, "Media Framing and Social Movement Mobilization: German Peace Protest against INF Missiles, the Gulf War, and NATO Peace Enforcement in Bosnia," *European Journal of Political Research* 41, no. 1 (2002): 37–80.; Chin-Chuan Lee and Junghye Yang, "Foreign News and National Interest: Comparing U.S. and Japanese Coverage of a Chinese Student Movement," *Gazette (Leiden, Netherlands)* 56, no. 1 (August 1, 1996): 1–18.; James F. Larson and Jiande Chen, "Television and Foreign Policy: US Response to the Beijing and Kwangju Pro-democracy Movements," *Asian Journal of Communication* 2, no. 2 (January 1, 1992): 78–104.; Jules Boykoff, "Framing Dissent: Mass-Media Coverage of the Global Justice Movement," *New Political Science* 28, no. 2 (June 2006): 201–28.

⁵⁴ Julian Gottlieb, "Protest News Framing Cycle: How The New York Times Covered Occupy Wall Street," *International Journal of Communication* 9, no. 0 (January 15, 2015): 23.; Kevin DeLuca, Sean Lawson, and Ye Sun, "Occupy Wall Street on the Public Screens of Social Media: The Many Framings of the Birth of a Protest Movement," *Communication, Culture & Critique* 5, no. 4 (December 2012): 483–509.; Maria Kyriakidou and Jose Javier Olivas Osuna, "The Indignados Protests in the Spanish and Greek Press: Moving beyond the 'Protest Paradigm'?", *European Journal of Communication* 32, no. 5 (October 1, 2017): 457–72.; Martin Elena, "Framing International Media in the Face of Social Movements: CNN and Al-Jazeera English in the Fall of Morsi," *Communication & Society* 29, no. 3 (July 2016): 119–30.; Naila Hamdy and Ehab H. Gomaa, "Framing the Egyptian Uprising in Arabic Language Newspapers and Social Media," *Journal of Communication* 62, no. 2 (April 2012): 195–211.; Michel M. Haigh and Michael Bruce, "A Comparison of the Visual and Story Frames Al Jazeera English and CNN Employed during the 2011 Egyptian Revolution," *International Communication Gazette* 79, no. 4 (June 1, 2017): 419–33.; Federica Fornaciari, "Framing the Egyptian Revolution: A Content Analysis of Al Jazeera English and the BBC," *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research* 4, no. 2/3 (March 20, 2012): 223–35.; Mohammed el-Nawawy

a decrease in the significance of the protest paradigm in news reporting. Scholars believe that with the advent of social media and the interplay between such direct communication and the news media there are more positive perceptions of social movements. In fact, through social media, protesters can circumvent the news media (and the protest paradigm) in turn receiving more favorable coverage.

Lastly, there is a niche section of this literature that has explored media framing of color revolutions and protest movements much like the Colorful Revolution in Macedonia. In particular, scholars have explored the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan in Ukraine, the color revolutions in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, protests in Belarus and Uzbekistan, and the Green Movement in Iran.⁵⁵ The studies that focus on the East European space have

and Mohamad Hamas Elmasry, "Revolution or Crisis? Framing the 2011 Tahrir Square Protests in Two Pan-Arab Satellite News Networks," *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies* 4, no. 2 (April 1, 2015): 239–58.; Pertti Alasuutari, Ali Qadir, and Karin Creutz, "The Domestication of Foreign News: News Stories Related to the 2011 Egyptian Revolution in British, Finnish and Pakistani Newspapers," *Media, Culture & Society* 35, no. 6 (September 1, 2013): 692–707; Mikkel Fugl Eskjær, "Changing Revolutions, Changing Attention? Comparing Danish Press Coverage of the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Syria," *Global Media Journal : German Edition* 2, no. 1 (May 1, 2012).; Tao Papaioannou, "Overcoming the Protest Paradigm? Framing of the 2013 Cypriot Protests in International Online News Media," *The Cyprus Review; Nicosia* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 35–69.; Cengiz Erisen and Paul Kubicek, "Media and Democracy in Turkey: An Analysis on the News Media Framing of Gezi Park Protests ÇağKan SaYin and EmrE Toros," in *Democratic Consolidation in Turkey* (Routledge, 2016), 101–32.; Boonlert Supadiloke, "Framing Thailand's Political Crisis: Press Coverage of Protest Movements during the 2014 General Election," *Asia Pacific Media Educator* 25, no. 2 (December 1, 2015): 319–32.

⁵⁵ Andrés Schipani-Adúriz, "Through an Orange-Colored Lens: Western Media, Constructed Imagery, and Color Revolutions," *Demokratizatsiya* 15, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 87–115.; Dmytro Hubenko, "Frame Analysis of the New York Times and Izvestia Coverage of the Presidential Elections and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004," 2006.; Kohei Watanabe, "Measuring News Bias: Russia's Official News Agency ITAR-TASS' Coverage of the Ukraine Crisis," *European Journal of Communication* 32, no. 3 (June 1, 2017): 224–41.; Markus Ojala and Mervi Pantti, "Naturalising the New Cold War: The Geopolitics of Framing the Ukrainian Conflict in Four European Newspapers," *Global Media and Communication* 13, no. 1 (April 1, 2017): 41–56.; Galina Miazhevich, "International Broadcasting and the Conflict-Related National Media Events: The Framing of EuroMaidan by the BBC and RT," in *Media Events: A Critical Contemporary Approach*, ed. Bianca Mitu and Stamatis Poulakidakos (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 53–70.; Juyan Zhang and Shahira Fahmy, "Color Revolutions in Colored Lenses: A Comparative Analysis of U.S. and Russian Press Coverage of Political Movements in Ukraine, Belarus and Uzbekistan," *International Journal of Communication* 3, no. 0 (April 20, 2009): 23.; Tatiana Varacheva and Sergiu Gherghina, "Neutral or Biased? The Presentation of the Kyrgyzstan and Egypt Uprisings by RIA Novosti," *Europe-Asia Studies* 70, no. 8 (September 14, 2018): 1213–35.; Andrés Schipani-Adúriz, "Through an Orange-Colored Lens: Western Media, Constructed Imagery, and Color Revolutions," *Demokratizatsiya* 15, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 87–115.; Meysam Tayebipour, "Framing the Green Movement and the 2017–2018

come to similar conclusions in their analysis of reporting on the color revolutions. In particular, these studies have found that Western media (such as the New York Times or the BBC) tend to paint the protesters in a positive light, associate them with pro-democracy elements, give credence to their demands, and tie them to Western foreign policy efforts in the region. On the other hand, Russian media (such as Izvestia or RT) tend to favor regimes in power (if it suits their interests) and paint the protesters in a negative light.

As such, it is important to clarify that the protest paradigm selectively applies to certain cases, particularly when it comes to international broadcasters. Some international broadcasters may frame protests or revolutions taking place outside their borders in a favorable way as it aligns with their country's foreign policy objectives thus eschewing the protest paradigm. Other broadcasters may utilize the protest paradigm as it serves to further their country's objectives. This dynamic plays into the analysis of this research as Germany's Deutsche Welle eschews the protest paradigm in reporting on the Colorful Revolution whereas Sputnik News utilizes the protest paradigm in framing the protests.

Overall, the interdisciplinary field connecting protests with news media has seen little analysis of state-owned international broadcasters when compared to private media and even less so on events, such as color revolutions, in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. In fact, no one has written about media framing and protests in Macedonia making the present research a significant scholarly inquiry. The following section will provide an overview of Macedonia's recent history, German and Russian interests in the Balkan region, and an outline of the Colorful Revolution protests.

Iranian Protests by the Kayhan Newspaper," in *The Power of Civil Society in the Middle East and North Africa* (Routledge, 2019), 138–51.

Background

Macedonia formally gained independence in 1991 with the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Since independence, Macedonia has made significant strides toward accession into the European Union (EU) and in 2020 formally joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁵⁶ All major political parties in the country have, since independence, openly declared their support for Macedonia's Euro-Atlantic integration goals and generally been active in pursuing these policies when in power. However, Macedonia finds itself at the "crossroads of Europe" in the heart of the Balkans and as such many regional and global powers have sought to gain influence in the country for their own strategic interests – Germany and Russia among them.

GERMAN (AND EUROPEAN UNION) INTERESTS IN MACEDONIA

Germany has had strategic interests in the broader Balkan region since the 19th century. During the Second World War, Nazi Germany was allied with and supported fascist Bulgaria's occupation of Macedonia.⁵⁷ Despite this history, during the Yugoslav-era many Macedonians and other Yugoslavs went and worked in Germany as Gastarbeiters.⁵⁸ Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, German foreign policy toward Macedonia has become deeply connected and aligned with that of the European Union. This revolves around supporting Macedonia's integration into the European Union and NATO. However, Germany as well as other major European players such as France are also keen on keeping stability in the Balkan region following the wars in the 1990s. As such, European foreign

⁵⁶ Sarah E. Garding, *North Macedonia: In Brief*, CRS Report No. R45739 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2019).

⁵⁷ Stephen G. Gross, *Export Empire: German Soft Power in Southeastern Europe, 1890–1945*, New Studies in European History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁵⁸ Sara Bernard, *Deutsch Marks in the Head, Shovel in the Hands and Yugoslavia in the Heart: The Gastarbeiter Return to Yugoslavia (1965–1991)*, 1st ed. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, O, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2019).

policy, despite seeking to promote democracy across the Balkan region is more focused on stability. As Theresia Töglhofer and Cornelius Adebahr have argued:

...stability has become the most frequently cited reason for supporting the EU's widening towards the Balkans. Across the board, there is a shared perception among decision-makers and foreign policy experts that any new conflict situation would have clear repercussions on Germany. Therefore, neglecting these states would in the long run be more cost-intensive than engaging with them under the current Stabilisation and Association Process. In addition, the potential for democratic transformation and economic development via European integration are among the reasons most frequently invoked by German officials to argue in favour of EU enlargement to the Balkans.⁵⁹

As such, Germany as well as the European Union have pandered to and supported autocrats across the Balkans – including in Macedonia – in the name of stability. Florian Bieber has described this system as “a stabilitocracy” or “... a regime that includes considerable shortcomings in terms of democratic governance, yet enjoys external legitimacy by offering some supposed stability... exchange of stability for external lenience on matters of democracy...”⁶⁰ That external lenience is offered by EU institutions as well as major Western countries such as Germany, the United States, and others. Similarly, Germany (together with Austria and many other EU member-states) in prioritizing security in the region and at home focused heavily on Macedonia during the migrant crisis between 2015-2017. German leaders as well as those of other EU member states pressured Macedonia to close its border with Greece in order to deal with the large numbers of migrants heading to Western Europe via the Balkan route.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Theresia Töglhofer and Cornelius Adebahr, “Firm Supporter and Severe Critic – Germany’s Two-Pronged Approach to EU Enlargement in the Western Balkans,” *Journal of Southeast European & Black Sea Studies* 17, no. 4 (December 2017): 526.

⁶⁰ Florian Bieber, “The Rise (and Fall) of Balkan Stabilitocracies,” *Horizons* (Center for International Relations and Sustainable Development, 2018), <http://www.cirsd.org/en/horizons/horizons-winter-2018-issue-no-10/the-rise-and-fall-of-balkan-stabilitocracies>.

⁶¹ Alice Greider, “Outsourcing Migration Management: The Role of the Western Balkans in the European Refugee Crisis,” *Migrationpolicy.Org*, August 16, 2017,

Germany also heavily emphasizes economic relations with Macedonia. Consistently, Germany has either been Macedonia's first or second most important trading partner.⁶² There are a number of major German companies in Macedonia, such as Draexlmaier, that employ thousands of people.⁶³ Similarly, a large number of Macedonian citizens live and work in Germany on a short-term or even long-term basis.⁶⁴ Many go as high-skilled workers such as doctors and medical professionals whereas others work in construction and the restaurant industry. As such, aside from economic relations, Germany strongly advocates for the study of the German language in Macedonia where it is the second most studied foreign language (after English).⁶⁵

Finally, there are several German non-profit organizations and political foundations such as Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung which are active on the political and civil society scene in Macedonia. Similarly, together with a range of EU mechanisms from IPA funds, EU Commission efforts, and European civil society groups – Germany plays an instrumental role in a range of “democracy promotion” related activities in Macedonia.⁶⁶ These include supporting the efficiency of the parliament, trainings for political parties, supporting the training of lawyers and judges, among other efforts.⁶⁷ Another major engagement led by Germany has been the Berlin Process. The

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/outsourcing-migration-management-western-balkans-europes-refugee-crisis>.

⁶² “Germany and North Macedonia: Bilateral Relations,” German Federal Foreign Office, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/laenderinformationen/mazedonien-node/bilateral/228106>.

⁶³ Sinisa Marusic Jakov, “Germany’s Draxlmaier to Invest in Macedonia,” *Balkan Insight*, March 23, 2012, <https://balkaninsight.com/2012/03/23/germany-s-draxlemaier-invests-in-macedonia/>.

⁶⁴ Ana Aceska, “Transnational Experts, Rooted Careers. Migrant Professionals from Macedonia in Germany,” *Südost-Europa* 64, no. 1 (2016): 79–95.

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Simonida Kacarska, “The EU in Macedonia : From Inter-Ethnic to Intra-Ethnic Political Mediator in an Accession Deadlock,” in *The EU and Member State Building* (Routledge, 2014), 102–21.

⁶⁷ Marija Risteska, “The Role of the EU in Promoting Good Governance in Macedonia: Towards Efficiency and Effectiveness or Deliberative Democracy?,” *Nationalities Papers* 41, no. 3 (May 1, 2013): 431–46.

Berlin Process “is an initiative aimed at stepping up regional cooperation in the Western Balkans and aiding the integration of these countries into the European Union” and was initiated by German Chancellor Angela Merkel in the fall of 2014.⁶⁸ The process was launched by Merkel in the aftermath of EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker’s official statement that “there will be no new enlargement in the next five years...”⁶⁹ The Berlin process consists of summits among the leaders of the Western Balkans and European partners as well as side meetings with civil society groups, a business forum focused on investment, and a youth forum dealing with youth issues in the region. Through these initiatives there is a coalescing of both German and EU interest in Macedonia and the broader Balkan region.

RUSSIAN INTERESTS IN MACEDONIA

Russian foreign policy toward Macedonia, like that of Germany, relates to larger efforts which it pursues across the broader Balkan region.⁷⁰ However, although smaller in terms of its economic footprint than Germany, Russian policy in Macedonia is just as broad. On a sociocultural level, Russian politicians and officials often express rhetorical support for various Slavic and Eastern Orthodox populations in the Balkans including ethnic Macedonians. This supposed religious and cultural connection is often lifted to mythical levels to compensate for the lack of positive shared history between Russia and Macedonia. For example, Russian leaders have commemorated with Macedonian presidents the Sts. Cyril and Methodius (who were originally from the Macedonia region)

⁶⁸ “About,” The Berlin Process, <https://berlinprocess.info/about/>.

⁶⁹ “Juncker to Head EU Bloc’s Executive Arm Confirmed by European Parliament,” *Daily Sabah*, July 16, 2014, sec. World, <https://www.dailysabah.com/europe/2014/07/16/juncker-to-head-eu-blocs-executive-arm-confirmed-by-european-parliament>.

⁷⁰ Vincent L. Morelli, *The Balkans and Russia*, CRS Report No. IN10851 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2018).

holiday as the origin of the Cyrillic alphabet.⁷¹ However, often to Macedonia's detriment, Russia has historically supported Macedonia's neighbors – Serbia and Bulgaria – from their independence from the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century to the present.⁷² Regardless, over the past thirty years, the Russian state as well as individual Russian citizens have begun to heavily invest economically and politically in the country.

Russia is a major energy investor in Macedonia with both Lukoil and Gazprom having extensive reach. In particular, Lukoil owns many gas stations across the country and the Trans Balkan pipeline – operated by Russia – is the country's main source of gas energy.⁷³ In recent years, Macedonia hoped to become part of Russia's now failed South Stream pipeline project. Despite the failure of South Stream – the Turk Stream alternative pipeline – has begun and with possible expansions Macedonia hopes to have a stake in this project. Aside from such state-sanctioned Russian investments in Macedonia there have also been a range of private investments from Russian businessmen and oligarchs. These individuals have invested in Macedonian sports clubs, hotels, the gambling industry, and more. The Russian businessman Sergey Samsonenko is widely known to own Football Club Vardar and Handball Club Vardar and financially supported the construction of the Rossiya hotel as well as a Russian Orthodox Church in the Aerodrom municipality of Skopje.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Mariya Cheresheva, "Putin's Homage to Cyrillic Makes Bulgarians See Red," *Balkan Insight*, May 25, 2017, <https://balkaninsight.com/2017/05/25/kremlin-s-stance-on-cyrillic-origin-angers-sofia-05-25-2017/>; Sinisa Jakov-Marusic, "Macedonia President Greeted Warmly in Moscow," *Balkan Insight*, May 24, 2017, <https://balkaninsight.com/2017/05/24/macedonia-s-president-greeted-warmly-in-moscow-05-24-2017/>.

⁷² Katrin Boeckh, *The Balkan Wars from Contemporary Perception to Historic Memory*, 1st ed. 2017 (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, Palgrave Macmillan US, Springer International Publishing, 2017).; Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2003).

⁷³ Barbora Chrzová et al., "Western Balkans at the Crossroads: Assessing Influences of Non-Western External Actors" (Prague Security Studies Institute, 2019), <https://www.balkancrossroads.com/publication>.

⁷⁴ Sinisa Jakov-Marusic, "Sergey Samsonenko, Macedonia's Vanished Sporting Hero," *Balkan Insight*, August 28, 2017, <https://balkaninsight.com/2017/08/28/sergey-samsonenko-macedonia-s-vanished-sporting-hero-08-24-2017/>.

On the political scene, in recent years (and especially during the political crisis between 2015 and 2017) the ruling nationalist Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) was seen as inching closer to Russia. The Macedonian President, Gjorge Ivanov, of the VMRO-DPMNE has visited Russia and was warmly received many times during his tenure. Additionally, after existing in various formations since 2002, the United Macedonia party (renamed after Vladimir Putin’s United Russia in 2018) – a small Russophile party – launched an active effort to change Macedonia’s foreign policy and steer it more toward Russia rather than the West.⁷⁵ This political element became increasingly salient during the political crisis in Macedonia and in the aftermath of the Colorful Revolution of 2016.

Finally, in 2017 and following the Colorful Revolution, evidence emerged (reported by the *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project* and *The Guardian*) that “Russian spies and diplomats have been involved in a nearly decade-long effort to spread propaganda and provoke discord in Macedonia.” In particular, the “[t]he Kremlin’s goal is to stop them from joining NATO and to pry them away from western influence... They also show efforts by Serbian intelligence to support pro-Russian and anti-western nationalists in Macedonia.”⁷⁶ As such, this research assumes that Russia had an interest in the political crisis in Macedonia and the 2016 Colorful Revolution protests. As Christopher Walker has argued, “Russia, like China and Iran, sees an opportunity to exploit the

⁷⁵ Barbora Chrzová, Anja Grabovac, Martin Hála, Jan Lalić (Eds.) 2019. “Western Balkans at the Crossroads: Assessing Influences of Non-Western External Actors.” The Prague Security Studies Institute.

⁷⁶ Luke Harding, Aubrey Belford, and Saska Cvetkovska, “Russia Actively Stoking Discord in Macedonia since 2008, Intel Files Say,” *The Guardian*, June 4, 2017, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/04/russia-actively-stoking-discord-in-macedonia-since-2008-intel-files-say-leak-kremlin-balkan-nato-west-influence>; Aubrey Belford et al., “Leaked Documents Show Russian, Serbian Attempts to Meddle in Macedonia,” *OCCRP*, <https://www.occrp.org/en/spooksandspin/leaked-documents-show-russian-serbian-attempts-to-meddle-in-macedonia/>.

information space in the Balkans... A large part of Russia's editorial efforts... are aimed at assailing the West, distorting perceptions of democracy, and tarnishing the image of the United States and the EU.”⁷⁷ In order to contextualize both Russian and German engagements in Macedonia it is important to review some recent history and events.

MACEDONIAN POLITICS AND PROTEST 2006 – 2016

Between 2006 and 2017, under the leadership of Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and his VMRO-DPMNE party, the general state of democracy in Macedonia significantly deteriorated. Following Greece's veto of Macedonia's accession to NATO at the 2008 Bucharest Summit the country found itself at a standstill with the VMRO-DPMNE government unable to deliver on Euro-Atlantic integration. In the aftermath of this event, PM Gruevski and the VMRO-DPMNE slid toward a more nationalist and authoritarian path with marked drops in media freedom, a shrinking civil society space, stagnant economy, and international isolation.⁷⁸ Scholars and observers have described the situation in Macedonia between 2009 and 2015 as “state-capture” referring to the fact that state institutions no longer function in the interests of citizens, but rather for those who have captured the state – in this case the ruling VMRO-DPMNE party and its business partners and cronies.⁷⁹

Under these circumstances, a range of anti-government protests emerged starting in 2011 around specific issues such as police brutality, media freedom and attacks on

⁷⁷ Christopher Walker, “The Authoritarian Threat: The Hijacking of ‘Soft Power,’” *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 1 (January 27, 2016): 60.

⁷⁸ Vasko Popetrevski, “The European Commission's Complicity in Macedonia's State Capture,” *CEPS*, July 24, 2017, <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/european-commissions-complicity-macedonias-state-capture/>.

⁷⁹ Simonida Kacarska, “Freeing the Captured State in Macedonia: What Role for EU Accession?” (Freedom House, November 2017), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/analytical-brief/2017/freeing-captured-state-macedonia-what-role-eu-accession>.

journalists, LGBTQI rights, and education. By early 2015, a student movement emerged and was actively challenging the VMRO-DPMNE government.⁸⁰ During the height of the student protests in February 2015 the opposition Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) seized on the momentum of civic activism and released to the public wiretapped recordings known as “bombs.”⁸¹

These “bombs” marked the beginning of a political crisis which enveloped the country for the next few years and ultimately lead to the Colorful Revolution of 2016. The wiretapped recordings were alarming to domestic and international observers alike. It is assumed the Prime Minister Gruevski and his VMRO-DPMNE government wiretapped some 20,000 individuals in Macedonia. From journalists and opposition politicians to civil society leaders, foreign dignitaries, and ironically the VMRO-DPMNE leadership itself – all were caught on tape. The recordings include evidence of the VMRO-DPMNE party and its ministers handpicking judges, eavesdropping on journalists, joking about ethnically cleansing the Albanian minority, ordering the rape of opposition politicians in jail, rigging elections, giving public procurement bids to businesses in their favor, and even covering up murder.⁸²

These revelations led to massive protests led by a movement that came to be known as “#Протестирам” (#Protestiram) or “#IProtest.” This movement, whose protests were later joined by the opposition SDSM itself, called for the resignation of the VMRO-DPMNE government. However, in the summer of 2015 leading political parties in

⁸⁰ Tom Junes, “An Unruly Younger Generation? Student Protest and the Macedonian Crisis,” *Political Critique*, March 25, 2016, sec. Reporting, <http://politicalcritique.org/world/2016/student-protest-and-the-macedonian-crisis/>.

⁸¹ Joanna Berendt, “Macedonia Government Is Blamed for Wiretapping Scandal,” *The New York Times*, June 21, 2015, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/22/world/europe/macedonia-government-is-blamed-for-wiretapping-scandal.html>.

⁸² James Montague, “Bombs Over Skopje,” *POLITICO Magazine*, May 24, 2015, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/05/bombs-over-skopje-118218.html>.

Macedonia (VMRO-DPMNE, SDSM as well as two ethnic Albanian parties – the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) and the Democratic Party for Albanians (DPA)), under the banner of the European Union, signed the Przino Agreement in a bid to end the crisis. The Przino Agreement stipulated that a Special Prosecutor’s Office will be formed to investigate the wiretapped recordings, the incumbent government would resign in January 2016, and a technical government with ministerial positions shared by the parties would pave the way for elections in April 2016.⁸³

The implementation of the Przino Agreement stalled multiple times due to disagreements between VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM. However, in September 2015 a Special Prosecutor’s Office was formally established and began to operate under the leadership of special prosecutor Katica Janeva. Investigations into VMRO-DPMNE officials, based on the content of the wiretaps, were immediately opened. In January 2016, PM Nikola Gruevski resigned per the Przino Agreement to pave the way for elections in April. However, the opposition SDSM argued at the time that not enough reforms were made, including the vetting of the electoral list or freedom of the media, for free and fair elections to be held. The crisis continued anew, the EU and US once again engaged the political parties, who then came to a new deal to postpone the elections until June 5, 2016. As part of this process, the Parliament dissolved itself in early April 2016.

COLORFUL REVOLUTION

A week after the parliament had disbanded, Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov – a supporter of the ruling VMRO-DPMNE – announced on April 12, 2016 that he was

⁸³ “European Union - EEAS (European External Action Service) | Agreement between the Four Political Parties,” July 20, 2016, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia/press_corner/all_news/news/2016/2016-07-20_agreement_en.htm..

pardoning all 56 officials under investigation by the Special Prosecutor in order to “break the tension before the elections.”⁸⁴ This immediately sparked outrage among the broader public who amassed in Skopje. The first night of protest was marred by violence with protesters demolishing and setting on fire the President’s office in central Skopje. In the aftermath of the pardons, a new protest movement, pushed forward by the previous “#IProtest” movement, took to the streets. The movement ultimately came to be known as the “Colorful Revolution” because protesters used paint to color various government buildings and monuments around Skopje to showcase their disapproval with the pardons and government.⁸⁵ It was also a play on words regarding the idea of a Color Revolution, like those that took place across Eastern Europe and Central Asia, which was commonly used in propaganda by the government against the protests. The term is also common in academia. Scholars Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik have described color revolutions, or electoral revolutions, as “attempts by opposition leaders and citizens to use elections, sometimes in combination with political protests, to defeat illiberal incumbents or their anointed successors; to bring liberal oppositions to power; and to shift their regimes in a decidedly more democratic direction.”⁸⁶ Indeed, the ultimate goal of the Colorful Revolution movement in Macedonia was the removal of the VMRO-DPMNE from power. The protesters gathered nightly at 6:00pm in front of the Special Prosecutor’s Office (in a sign of support for the legal proceedings against corrupt officials) and marched to various government buildings (parliament, ministry of justice, government headquarters).

⁸⁴ Kole Casule, “Macedonian President Pardons 56 in Wiretap Scandal, U.S. Raps Move,” *Reuters*, April 13, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-macedonia-wiretap-usa-idUSKCN0XA1ZB>.

⁸⁵ Kristina Ozimec, “Macedonia: ‘Colorful Revolution’ Paints Raucous Rainbow,” *Deutsche Welle*, April 21, 2016, <https://www.dw.com/en/macedonia-colorful-revolution-paints-raucous-rainbow/a-19203365>.

⁸⁶ Valerie J. Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, “International Diffusion and Postcommunist Electoral Revolutions,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Democratic Revolutions in Post-Communist States, 39, no. 3 (September 1, 2006): 284.

As the Colorful Revolution protests continued to garner more support and spread to other cities in Macedonia – the ruling VMRO-DPMNE government supported the creation of the Citizens Movement for the Defense of Macedonia (GDOM) as a way to show support for their rule and serve as a rival movement to the Colorful Revolution.⁸⁷ In April, both movements continued to gather every evening without any physical altercations. In May 2016, early parliamentary elections which had been scheduled for June were officially postponed, once again, due to the opposition SDSM and ethnic Albanian parties refusing to participate until conditions were formally met to hold free and fair elections. As the protests continued into the summer, with pressure from the EU and US, President Ivanov reversed his decision and revoked all his pardons. Despite this, Colorful Revolution and GDOM protests continued albeit in smaller gatherings until the start of the election campaign in November. Early parliamentary elections were officially held on December 11, 2016. It is this period – that lasted from April 2016 with the pardons until elections in December 2016 – and the reporting of Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News which will be analyzed in the next section.

⁸⁷ Sinisa Jakov-Marusic, “Thirteenth Night of Protests Ends in Macedonia,” *Balkan Insight*, April 26, 2016, <https://balkaninsight.com/2016/04/26/thirteenth-night-of-protests-ends-in-macedonia-04-26-2016/>.

Analysis

This section will analyze the online news stories from Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News regarding Macedonia's Colorful Revolution and the news frames present within them. In particular, 94 online stories from DW – 24 of which in English and 70 in Macedonian as well as 84 online stories from Sputnik News – 22 of which in English and 62 in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian were reviewed. The news frames will be unpacked using Entman's operationalization of frames i.e. that they define a problem, state the cause, make a moral judgement, and offer a remedy. Additionally, this analysis will explore the various framing devices and discourses present in the news frames.

FRAMING DEVICES
Linguistic patterns
Word and phrase selection
Grammatical constructions
Story coherence
Metaphors
Exemplars (historical examples)
Catchphrases
Depictions
Visual images

Figure 1 List of Potential Framing Devices

Furthermore, in exploring the news frames, it will be important to also note what is omitted from the reporting and what is highlighted in the news texts. Each section will first examine the regular news texts and then also provide a separate analysis of the opinion pieces and commentary news at the end. Finally, the frames and their subsequent narratives

will be compared with the official foreign policy statements of the German and Russian Foreign Ministries regarding the Colorful Revolution protests in Macedonia.

DEUTSCHE WELLE REPORTING IN ENGLISH

Through a qualitative reading of DW's twenty-four English-language news stories on the protests in Macedonia from April 2016 to December 2016 – this research found two overarching news frames. The first frame, domestic crisis, focuses on how the situation in Macedonia is a domestic crisis emanating from internal political issues rather than a geopolitical conflict between East and West as was presented in most international private media. The second frame, rule of law, focuses on the importance of the rule of law in Macedonia and the role of the newly formed Special Prosecutor's Office.

Domestic Crisis Frame

The domestic crisis frame is operationalized in Deutsche Welle's reporting as follows. First, the problem is framed as the general state of corruption in Macedonia. References to issues related to state-capture – domestic political and economic interests misusing the state administration and resources for personal benefit – are prevalent throughout DW's reporting. The cause of this problem is identified as the VMRO-DPMNE government and the small clique of individuals around former Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski. This overall situation is then judged negatively – especially in terms of Macedonia's prospects for accession to the European Union. Finally, the domestic crisis frame presents a remedy to these issues by giving legitimacy to the anti-government protests and their broader demands for change in Macedonia.

In framing the problem as domestic corruption, DW's reporting focused on the economic impacts incurred by Macedonian citizens and how that related to dissatisfaction

expressed during the protests. In a video explainer about the protests, DW's reporter notes that "the government is spending a lot of money on monuments... spending too much money when the unemployment rate is at 25%..."⁸⁸ Another article, looking at youth and their future in Macedonia in light of the protests, stated that "Youth unemployment tops 50 percent, and precarious working conditions and poverty are part of life for most young people."⁸⁹ Not only do both of these examples evoke domestic corruption problems in Macedonia, but they serve to highlight DW's mission to report on the economy and youth in developing countries. The use of terms such as "unemployment," "precarious," and "poverty" serve to paint a negative image of the lived experiences of everyday Macedonians.

In describing the cause of these problems, DW's domestic crisis frame directly points the finger at the VMRO-DPMNE government. Statements such as "the government's tight control over the press and the conduct of elections" and "only a year or so ago, people were afraid to loudly criticize the government in bars and cafes" not only place blame on the government, but openly make the case for the government's autocratic behavior.⁹⁰ One of these articles, written by a local Macedonian journalist for DW, goes so far as to describe the government in the following way:

In the past 10 years, Gruevski and his cronies built a corrupt system based on intimidation and clientelism, but also on limiting women's rights and promoting machoism, chauvinism, homophobia and anti-feminism.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Shoo, "@dwnews - 'Colorful Revolution' breaks in Macedonia," *DW News*, April 20, 2016, <https://www.dw.com/en/dwnews-colorful-revolution-breaks-in-macedonia/av-19202248>

⁸⁹ Elizabeta Milosevska, "Can the 'Colorful Revolution' keep Macedonians home?," *DW News*, April 23, 2016, <https://www.dw.com/en/can-the-colorful-revolution-keep-macedonians-home/a-19210107>

⁹⁰ Reuters/AP, "Macedonia calls off June 5 national elections," *DW News*, May 5, 2016, <https://www.dw.com/en/macedonia-calls-off-june-5-national-elections/a-19266887>; Kristina Ozimec, "Special Prosecution: New faces, new hope in Macedonia," *DW News*, May 23, 2016, <https://www.dw.com/en/special-prosecution-new-faces-new-hope-in-macedonia/a-19277508>.

⁹¹ Ozimec, "Special Prosecution."

Terms such as “afraid,” “tight control,” “cronies,” corrupt system,” “clientelism,” “intimidation,” and “limiting” all serve to present an image of an authoritarian state of affairs in Macedonia. They are also a common set of vocabulary often used to describe autocratic states and as such these terms serve as an intertextual link so the reader can connect the situation to other familiar contexts where a country has been described in the same way.

In producing a moral judgement, the frame highlights corruption as well as impunity (particularly President Ivanov’s pardons which sparked the protests) and how these actions negatively reflect on Macedonia’s prospects for EU integration. Statements such as “... the US and EU warning the move [President Ivanov’s pardons] could hurt Macedonia’s chances of joining the 28-nation bloc” and “...EU officials demanded that President Ivanov revoke the pardons, and urged the country’s political parties to ‘find a common agreement that serves all citizens’” are emblematic of these concerns.⁹² Another DW article directly quotes a German official: “German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, whose country holds the rotating chair of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), said the pardons were ‘detrimental to the rule of law.’”⁹³ Phrases such as “rule of law,” “citizens,” “agreement,” and “urged” are used to signify the need for resolution and that the situation as it is cannot stand. Finally, the frame offers legitimacy to the protests and their demands as a remedy to the situation. Statements that directly note the protesters demands, such as “...demands are clear: First among them is to revoke the blanket pardon made by President George Ivanov. Second is Ivanov’s

⁹² Dpa/AFP, “Volatile third night of protests in Macedonia over wiretapping pardon,” *DW News*, April 14, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/en/volatile-third-night-of-protests-in-macedonia-over-wiretapping-pardon/a-19189984>

and Reuters/AP, “Macedonia national election.”

⁹³ AFP/dpa/Reuters, “Macedonian president stands by wiretapping pardons,” *DW News*, April 15, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/en/macedonian-president-stands-by-wiretapping-pardons/a-19192221>

irrevocable resignation. And parliamentary elections, which are scheduled for June 5, are to be delayed,” are an example of this.⁹⁴

The frame accomplishes this operationalization via problem, cause, judgement, and remedy through a range of framing devices. To reinforce the domestic nature of the crisis, DW’s English-language reporting repeatedly refers to and quotes “citizens.” The use of the term citizens, as in “[t]he president’s move, called unconstitutional by pundits and citizens alike,” evokes notions of citizenry and belonging to the country rather than the influence of some outside actor.⁹⁵ Furthermore, rather than simply reporting on the protests, DW’s use of “citizens” presents the events and problems as seen through the “protesters’ eyes.” For example, “[i]n protesters’ eyes, the president’s pardon is yet another signal that their government is corrupt at worst and incompetent at best.”⁹⁶ The objective here is to give DW’s reporting more legitimacy in that the news text is not subjective but objectively informed by “citizens” and seen through their “eyes.”

Similarly, DW avoids the “protest paradigm” in their reporting and utilizes positive phrases in describing the actions of the protesters. Rather than protesters vandalizing monuments by throwing paint, DW writes that “Bright colors are everywhere in downtown Skopje” and that “they [the protests] are truly colorful - not only because they have painted the symbols of Gruevism in Skopje, but also for their ethnic, religious and cultural diversity.”⁹⁷ Words such as “colorful,” and “diversity” provide positive and light-hearted connotations rather than negative and frightful ones. Aside from this focus on citizens and

⁹⁴ Conor Dillon, “Protesters hit Macedonia’s capital with paint balls and soap suds in a ‘Colorful Revolution,’” *DW News*, April 20, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/en/protesters-hit-macedonias-capital-with-paint-balls-and-soap-suds-in-a-colorful-revolution/a-19201617>

⁹⁵ Ozimec, “[Raucous](#) Rainbow”

⁹⁶ Dillon, “Paint Balls and Soap Suds.”

⁹⁷ Ozimec, “[Raucous](#) Rainbow.”; Boris Georgievski, “Opinion: Giving color to the kleptocrats in Macedonia,” *DW News*, April 23, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/en/opinion-giving-color-to-the-kleptocrats-in-macedonia/a-19209874>.

the protests, DW's English-language reporting also honed in on the Special Prosecutor's Office as part of the rule of law frame.

The Rule of Law Frame

The rule of law frame in DW's reporting presents the same problem, cause, and judgement as that of the domestic crisis frame. However, rather than presenting the protests and their demands as a remedy, the rule of law frame highlights the role of the Special Prosecutor's Office as essential to resolving Macedonia's problems. As noted earlier, Macedonia's Special Prosecutor's Office was formed to investigate the wiretapped recordings that were revealed in 2015. For months, the office had been opening cases into alleged corruption by VMRO-DPMNE officials. These are the investigations which President Ivanov's pardons halted and which led to the Colorful Revolution. Deutsche Welle's news texts directly signify the EU and Germany's role in the creation of this institution. They serve as an intertextual link to previous reporting about the creation and importance of the Special Prosecutor's Office. For example, "As a part of the EU-brokered deal, Macedonia also set up a special prosecutor to investigate the wiretapping revelations."⁹⁸ Other news texts go on to note the successful work of the office, such as "the Macedonian Special Prosecution has identified the domestic intelligence service as the source of massive illegal surveillance in the country."⁹⁹ Others directly signify dissatisfaction with the President's decision: "The domestic opposition, as well as the United States and European Union, had protested the decision to suspend the investigations, warning that Ivanov was stopping politicians from being held to

⁹⁸ Reuters/Beta/AP/dw, "Macedonian president halts probes into wiretapping," *DW News*, April 12, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/en/macedonian-president-halts-probes-into-wiretapping/a-19182337>.

⁹⁹ Boris Georgievski, "Macedonian prosecutors say telecom company holds key to surveillance scandal," *DW News*, December 1, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/en/macedonian-prosecutors-say-telecom-company-holds-key-to-surveillance-scandal/a-36602198>.

account.”¹⁰⁰ This creates a link to the judgement (i.e. that corruption as well as the pardons are bad for Macedonia’s future) in that it ties Western interests in the country to those calling for the end of impunity and the prosecution of corrupt officials domestically.

In terms of framing devices, some of DW’s English-language texts use hyperbole to portray the importance of the Special Prosecutor’s Office. One article notes that the “Special Prosecution body in Macedonia was set up to rein in corruption and criminal conduct by officials. It is led by three women who have become national heroines”¹⁰¹ Not only is the institution seen as powerful in that it can “rein in” corruption, but the prosecutors tasked with this work are seen as heroes. Such phrases attempt to give formal legitimacy to the institution by noting that it receives public support. This rule of law frame also appears in DW’s Macedonian-language reporting as will be elaborated upon in the following section.

Opinion Pieces in DW English Reporting

There were only two opinion pieces in DW’s English reporting and both were written by the head of DW’s Macedonian-language service based in Germany. The articles are sharp in their criticism of the VMRO-DPMNE government and call for the support of the European Union. For example,

Over the past 10 years, Macedonia's ruling national-conservative VMRO-DPMNE has imposed complete control over the state, its institutions, the judiciary and the media. During his reign as prime minister from August 2006 until he stepped down under pressure this year, VMRO leader Nikola Gruevski - with the help of his partner, the former guerrilla commander Ali Ahmeti, who was brought in to represent Macedonia's large Albanian community - built an authoritarian regime

¹⁰⁰ AP/AFP/dpa/Reuters, “Macedonia's President Ivanov revokes all pardons in wiretap scandal,” *DW News*, June 6, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/en/macedonias-president-ivanov-revokes-all-pardons-in-wiretap-scandal/a-19310761>.

¹⁰¹ Ozimec, “Special Prosecution.”

based on clientelism that pervaded every aspect of society, including, as revelations of wiretapping make clear, citizens' private lives.¹⁰²

This is a clear portrayal of the autocratic nature of the VMRO-DPMNE government and their system of state-capture. The opinion piece directly refers to the government as “an authoritarian regime.” As was mentioned earlier, DW’s English-language reporting focused on the diversity of the protests and unity between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. However, the opinion piece criticizes the ethnic Albanian party, the Democratic Union for Integration, and their leader Ali Ahmeti for being in the ruling coalition with VMRO-DPMNE. In this way DW draws a distinction between the unity of Albanians and Macedonians protesting in the streets and the ruling ethnic Albanian DUT’s unity with the VMRO-DPMNE “regime.”

Furthermore, in calling for Western support to the protests and the process of democratizing Macedonia, the second opinion piece states that:

The Macedonian patient is very sick and needs urgent help and attention from the EU and the international community. Otherwise, the crisis might easily endanger not only the existence of the country, but the stability of the whole region as well.¹⁰³

These sentiments echo the notion that the lack of democracy in Macedonia and the VMRO-DPMNE’s government’s rule threaten the country thus aligning with both frames in presenting the government as the problem. This rhetoric also aligns well with Germany and the EU’s broader mission of democracy promotion in Macedonia. Similarly, it coalesces with the normative values of democracy and human rights which are fundamental to both Germany and the EU’s foreign policy efforts in the region. As will be seen – similar sentiments regarding Western support and criticism of the government were expressed in opinion pieces in DW’s Macedonian-language reporting.

¹⁰² Georgievski, “Kleptocrats in Macedonia.”

¹⁰³ Boris Georgievski, “No cure for the Macedonian patient,” *DW News*, December 12, 2016, <https://www.dw.com/en/no-cure-for-the-macedonian-patient/a-36736283>.

DEUTSCHE WELLE REPORTING IN MACEDONIAN

This section will analyze the seventy news texts that were published in DW's Macedonian edition during the Colorful Revolution protests in Macedonia. Instead of a domestic crisis frame, DW's Macedonian edition employs a divided country frame. Both the English and Macedonian language editions share a rule of law frame.

Divided Country Frame

The divided country frame in DW's Macedonian-language reporting is manifest in the following ways. First, the growing politicization of the protests and the subsequent political division in the country is framed as the problem. The creation of a counter-protest movement by the VMRO-DPMNE government, to rival that of the Colorful Revolution, is seen as part of the cause of this division. The frame then judges this divided situation as detrimental to Macedonia's future. Finally, in offering a remedy it reinforces the need for justice to be served as well as for politicians to take accountability and find a way out of the polarized political environment.

In framing the problem and cause, DW's reporting notes how both protest movements organize rallies and how their goals differ. For example:

The counter-protest organized by the Civic Movement for the Defense of Macedonia (GDOM), which advocates for elections to be held on June 5 and gives support to the ruling VMRO-DPMNE, ended around 9:00pm. The protest in front of the government building, organized by "I Protest" ended around 10:00pm.¹⁰⁴

As the article makes clear, the Colorful Revolution protesters protest in front of the government building whereas the GDOM protesters protest in front of the opposition headquarters. In further depicting the differences between the two movements, another DW

¹⁰⁴ Katerina Blazevska, "Протестите - слика за поделена Македонија [The protests - a picture of a divided Macedonia]," *DW News*, April 14, 2016 <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19189965/>.

article remarks on their slogans and the individuals they reference. Emblematic of this are the following two examples.

A peaceful protest was held with chants of ‘Nikola, it’s over,’ and ‘Nikola, dictator,’ and ‘resign’ at Ilindenska No. 2 while the police remained behind the protective fence. The situation was different earlier. The march started in from of the Special Prosecutor’s Office and continued toward the Parliament, but was blocked by the police with metal barricades in front of the Triumphal Arch. ‘The parliament is ours,’ ‘No justice, no peace,’ shouted the protesters in front of a cordon of special police units, their banners saying ‘there is no amnesty for mobsters’...¹⁰⁵

The Colorful Revolution protesters, as described above, are seen shouting contemporary protest references such as “no justice, no peace.” The frame presents how the protesters link themselves to previous color revolutions in the region, i.e. that of the bulldozer revolution in Serbia, with the chant “Nikola, it’s over” which references the Serbian Otpor! movement’s slogan “He’s finished” regarding Slobodan Milosevic. The frame also alludes to how the protesters were “blocked by the police with metal barricades” to present their opposition to state authorities. The GDOM protesters are portrayed differently.

At the counter-protest in front of SDSM headquarters, another song was sung: ‘Nobody can do anything to you, Nikola.’ Organized by the Civic Movement for the Defense of Macedonia (GDOM), several thousand counter-protesters peacefully protested against the pardon of Zoran Zaev and Zoran Verushevski, but also against the opposition’s attempts to postpone the elections on June 5.¹⁰⁶

The GDOM movement is presented through their song “Nobody can do anything to you, Nikola” which portrays Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski as a strongman patriotically defending his country. However, this is presented pejoratively in Macedonian and portrays the protesters as enthralled with a Vladimir Putin wannabe. Another article

¹⁰⁵ Boris Georgievski, “Скопје, Битола и Струмица излегоа на улица, утре и Вашингтон [Skopje, Bitola and Strumica took to the streets, and tomorrow Washington],” *DW News*, April 16, 2016, <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19193567>.

¹⁰⁶ SN/mf/meta, “Нова вечер на протести и контрапротести во Скопје [A new evening of protests and counter-protests in Skopje],” *DW News*, April 15, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19192264>.

similarly referenced how the GDOM protesters used traditional Macedonian instruments in their protests – when read in Macedonian it gives them an almost backward, uneducated rural image.¹⁰⁷ The GDOM protesters are also presented in contrast to those of the Colorful Revolution based on who they are protesting against. Whereas the Colorful Revolution had Nikola Gruevski and former secret police chief Saso Mijalkov as targets, the GDOM protesters focused on opposition leader Zoran Zaev and former secret police chief Zoran Verusevski. This division further politicized the protests in turn marking the Colorful Revolution protests as anti-VMRO-DPMNE, but supposedly pro-SDSM whereas the GDOM movement was anti-SDSM, but pro-VMRO-DPMNE.

This same scenario of division between the two protest movements played out repeatedly in DW's almost daily reporting of the protests in the Macedonian edition. The reporting itself, in framing the division, served to further pit the Colorful Revolution protests against those organized by GDOM in support of the VMRO-DPMNE government. This reporting was complimented by a range of other stories that covered the future of the Special Prosecutor's Office, the status of their cases into alleged crimes committed by VMRO-DPMNE officials, and the need for citizens to see accountability – even criminal accountability – on the part of officials. Ultimately, a quote from one of the articles summed up the frame: "With the new protest and counter-protest, Skopje was tonight once again a picture of an entirely divided Macedonia."¹⁰⁸ Interestingly, the GDOM counter-protest movement did not feature at all in DW's English-language reporting. However, the rule of law frame was shared by both the English and Macedonian version of DW's coverage of the protests.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

¹⁰⁸ Blazevska, "Divided Macedonia."

Rule of Law Frame

The second frame in DW's Macedonian-language reporting mimics a frame that is also present in DW's English reporting: the rule of law frame. Again, the problem here is the general sense of corruption and state-capture in Macedonia which is caused by the VMRO-DPMNE government. This is judged as something negative for the country and to remedy this situation the frame paints a positive image of the Special Prosecutor's Office as a vehicle to overcome corruption in Macedonia. The reason the frame exists in both DW's English-language reporting and in the Macedonian-language version is twofold. First, Germany and the EU (together with the U.S.) were instrumental in the creation of this institution as part of their mediation efforts in Macedonia during the 2015 political crisis. Thus, it is in their interest to see the Special Prosecutor's Office succeed. Second, the Colorful Revolution protesters themselves began to give the Special Prosecutor's Office and the three women that led it a symbolic weight in their fight for change. As such, the Colorful Revolution protests started every evening at 6:00pm in front of the Special Prosecutor's Office as a gesture of support for the institution. Furthermore, what ultimately sparked the protests themselves was President Ivanov pardoning all the individuals under investigation by the institution.

The problem in the frame is quickly identified in multiple news texts by referring to what sparked the protesters. For example: "Thousands of citizens are protesting in the streets of Skopje tonight against President Ivanov's decision to declare a general amnesty for current and former functionaries suspected of criminal acts."¹⁰⁹ The cause of this problem is pinpointed squarely as the VMRO-DPMNE government. One DW article states: "By grossly distorting the facts, the ruling VMRO-DPMNE tried to place the first two

¹⁰⁹ Boris Georgievski, "Протести против Иванов на улиците на Скопје, уапсени и повредени [Protests against Ivanov in the streets of Skopje, arrested and wounded]," *DW News*, April 13, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19185182>.

indictments from the Special Prosecutor's Office on a religious level. On the other hand, public hope for access to justice has increased.”¹¹⁰ By “on a religious level,” the author is referring to claims made by the VMRO-DPMNE government against the indictments arguing that their actions were justified since the SDSM opposition wanted to prevent the construction of a church in Skopje. In this way they could spin the discourse away from their officials being charged with corruption and toward a discussion about the VMRO-DPMNE party's support for the Orthodox Church and the SDSM's purported antagonism to it.

Furthermore, in reiterating the sign of approval in DW's English version, an article in the Macedonian version highlights the same hyperbolic support for the Special Prosecutor's Office:

Three new faces give hope to a country shaken by an unending political crisis, corruption, and crime. The prosecutors from the Special Prosecutor's Office became new heroines after promising the return of justice in Macedonia.¹¹¹

Another article goes on to quote a protester of the Colorful Revolution who applauds the Special Prosecutor's work:

“The prosecutors are a strong beam of light in the darkest situation of our country” said Bekiri [a protester]. “They are hope and a pillar of the country in which we want to build our future – where justice will be respected and all will be equal before the law.”¹¹²

Finally, approval from Macedonian citizens is also highlighted to give further credibility to the Special Prosecutor's Office: “The faces of the prosecutors Katica Janeva, Fatime Fetai, and Lenche Ristoska can now be seen on t-shirts, posters, badges, and even coffee

¹¹⁰ Katerina Blazevska, “Две обвиненија од СЈО, двојно повеќе од власта [Two charges from the SPO, twice as many from the government],” *DW News*, September 16, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19555963>.

¹¹¹ Kristina Ozimec, “СЈО: Нови лица, нова надеж во Македонија [SPO: New faces, new hope in Macedonia],” *DW News*, May 25, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19279242>.

¹¹² *Ibid*

mugs. ‘Support for SPO’ has become the most popular shirt in Macedonia.”¹¹³ These images serve to provide a visual for the support given to the institution by Macedonia’s citizens.

The rule of law frame in Macedonian is similar to that in English. However, there are some differences. First, DW’s English-language reporting framed the Special Prosecutor’s Office more as an important step toward EU accession whereas the Macedonian-language reporting was focused on how the institution could provide justice and hope to a society so accustomed to seeing impunity. Rather than describing how the rule of law is a prerequisite for EU accession and quoting European officials’ concerns, the Macedonian-language version of DW quoted Macedonian citizens and how they want to see corrupt politicians held accountable. This is because the Macedonian version of DW picked up on the fact that accountability and justice were prioritized and as such more salient among the protesters in Macedonia than was the discourse surrounding EU accession.

Second, DW’s English reporting focused on the work of the office itself whereas the Macedonian reporting was more heavily focused around how citizens viewed the institution and gave it support via the protests. As such, the Macedonian edition of DW focused on how protesters gathered nightly in front of the Special Prosecutor’s Office, how the women leading the institution became symbols of hope, and how ensuring the survival of the institution gradually became part of their demands. Furthermore, in directly reporting on the institution, DW’s Macedonian service made it a point to describe the diversity of the three prosecutors. All three were women and one of them was Albanian. This was presented as similar to the ethnic diversity at the protests which was highlighted in DW’s

¹¹³ Ibid

English-language reporting. This was contrasted with the criminal actions of the ethnic-Albanian DUI party's ruling coalition with the Macedonian VMRO-DPMNE. These same issues of ethnic diversity and the state of justice in Macedonia feature in DW's Macedonian-language opinion pieces.

Opinion Pieces in DW's Macedonian Reporting

The opinion pieces in DW's Macedonian-language reporting do not mimic entire frames, but certain elements. For example, the favorable image of the protesters, their ethnic diversity, and the importance of the protests for Macedonia's future in both frames is reiterated in opinion pieces. For example, Lura Pollozhani and Dane Taleski argue that:

In this moment, it seems that citizens have the power to create new interethnic relations and change the public space and rhetoric. The way to do that is to participate in the protests and at least create a present moment in which all citizens of Macedonia share the fate of the country and work together to create a democratic future as equal individuals.¹¹⁴

Not only does this opinion piece give credibility to the protests as a mechanism for improving Macedonian democracy, but it also highlights interethnic relations. The piece argues that the ethnic diversity of the protests affords Macedonia a chance at realizing better interethnic relations between its people. As such, it furthers the favorable framing of the protests. Another opinion piece makes a similar claim about the importance of the protests: "Macedonia is protesting. Never before in their pluralistic history have citizens protested so much."¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Kura Pollozhani and Dane Taleski, "„Шарената револуција“ е шанса за нова, граѓанска Македонија [The "Colorful Revolution" is a chance for a new, civic Macedonia]," *DW News*, April 26, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19214524>.

¹¹⁵ Sefer Tahiri, "Меѓуетнички консензус за правда и слобода [Interethnic consensus on justice and freedom]," *DW News*, April 24, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19210989>.

Beyond favorable analysis of the protests, DW's Macedonian opinion pieces mimic those written in English and frame the VMRO-DPMNE government as part of the problem. A Macedonian-language opinion piece by the head of DW's Macedonian service in Germany – titled “The ninth circle of the ‘captured’ state” – directly refers to this situation. It includes a paragraph that reads “Macedonia today is the poorest country in Europe. Macedonia today is probably the most corrupt country in Europe. There is no free media in Macedonia today ... There is no life in Macedonia anymore.” Aside from the grim picture of Macedonia's democracy, the author places the blame squarely on the VMRO-DPMNE government:

After ten years of rule by VMRO-DPMNE, clientelism, nepotism and corruption that produce personal gain for individuals or groups, caused damage that calls into question the very physical survival of the state. That system must change, and the government that practiced it must fall unconditionally.¹¹⁶

Again, terms such as “clientelism,” “nepotism,” and “corruption” are used to paint a negative image of the government and convey that it has diverged from any democratic norms. However, statements made by German officials regarding the protests avoid such harsh language as will be seen in the following section.

COMPARISON WITH OFFICIAL GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENTS

Statements that were given by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs during Macedonia's Colorful Revolution hit at many of the same issues present within the various frames utilized by Deutsche Welle. In particular, the framing of the problem as corruption and abuse of power features in multiple statements. For example, “The President's decision to exempt politicians and officials accused of gross misconduct from criminal prosecution

¹¹⁶ Boris Georgievski, “Деветтиот круг во „заробената“ држава [The ninth circle of the "captured" state],” *DW News*, December 9, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-36663627>

is detrimental to the rule of law and legal certainty.”¹¹⁷ Similarly, “Allegations surrounding the abuse of power must be investigated in order for the Macedonian people to regain trust in the country’s democratic institutions” can be seen in the same light.¹¹⁸ The importance of Macedonia’s accession into European institutions is also highlighted in official German statements. This includes references regarding the need “to get their country back onto the European path,” “close cooperation with the EU Commission and the USA,” and “Only in this way will movement towards closer relations with the EU and the US be possible again”.¹¹⁹ Both statements on allegations of corruption and the need to continue on a European path align with frames DW utilized – particularly the framing of the problem and remedy.

The most prevalent discourse in official German statements emphasizes the importance of the work of the Special Prosecutor’s Office. Firm statements showing support for the institution, such as “This decision [President Ivanov’s pardons]... undermines the work of the special prosecution service and its mandate to investigate all claims that power has been abused,” “The special prosecutor must be able to go about her work without let or hindrance,” “The Special Prosecutor must be able to perform her mandate without having obstacles placed in her way,” and “...it is important that the special prosecutor’s office tasked with investigating allegations of abuse of power can continue its

¹¹⁷ “Foreign Minister Steinmeier on the Latest Developments in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” German Federal Foreign Office, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/160414-mazedonien/279894>.

¹¹⁸ “Statement by a Federal Foreign Office Spokesperson on Current Developments in the FYR of Macedonia,” German Federal Foreign Office, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/160519-mazedonien/280736>.

¹¹⁹ Ibid; and “Statement by Foreign Minister Steinmeier on the Elections in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,” German Federal Foreign Office, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/161212-wahlen-ejr-mazedonien/286164>.

work freely in order to strengthen the public's confidence in the country's democratic institutions" echo these sentiments.¹²⁰

The emphasis on the Special Prosecutor in Germany's official statements regarding the protests in Macedonia is twofold. First, as was noted earlier, Germany was an important factor in creating such an institution as part of the EU's mediation efforts and the subsequent Prizino Agreement in Macedonia. Second, in May 2016, just a few weeks after the protests started, German foreign minister Steinmeier appointed Johannes Haindl – a German diplomat – as special envoy for the situation in Macedonia.¹²¹ An integral part of Haindl's role was supporting the EU's ongoing mediation efforts in the aftermath of Ivanov's pardons and the work of the Special Prosecutor's Office in Macedonia. The alignment of the rule of law frames with these official statements signify that the Special Prosecutor's Office was both important in Germany's broader foreign policy efforts, it was locally salient among the protesters, and it furthered DW's mission to report on democracy and rule of law issues. As such, it was an obvious frame for DW to push forward in both English and Macedonian. However, the Special Prosecutor's Office is completely missing from the frames utilized by Sputnik News in their reporting on the Colorful Revolution.

SPUTNIK NEWS REPORTING IN BOTH ENGLISH AND BOSNIAN/CROATIAN/SERBIAN

This section will analyze the eighty-four news articles published by Sputnik News. Unlike DW, Sputnik News' reporting in both English and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian,

¹²⁰ "Latest Developments," German Federal Foreign Office; "Current Developments," German Federal Foreign Office; "Statement by Ambassador Haindl, Federal Foreign Office Special Representative for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on His Visit to Skopje," German Federal Foreign Office, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/160608-mazedonien/281110>; "Foreign Minister Steinmeier Welcomes Agreement between the Parties in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia," German Federal Foreign Office, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/160901-bm-mkd/283058>.

¹²¹ "Germany Appoints a Special Envoy to Macedonia to Help Resolve Political Crisis", Meta.Mk, May 4, 2016, <https://meta.mk/en/germany-appoints-a-special-envoy-to-macedonia-to-help-resolve-political-crisis/>.

utilized the same three major news frames in reporting on the Colorful Revolution protests in Macedonia. The first frame, foreign meddling, focuses on the purported role of Western actors such as the United States, NATO, and the European Union in the protests in Macedonia. The second frame, ethnic conflict and regional destabilization, pushes forth the idea that ethnic minorities (particularly ethnic Albanians) manipulated the protests to harm Macedonia and destabilize the region. The third and final frame, law and order, revolved around the importance of abidance of laws, elected officials, and the constitution in light of the protests.

It is important to recall that the English-language edition of Sputnik News, as stated on their website, targets an audience that is broader and more international. As such, the framing of the events in English is assumed to be more general and connected to other global issues or news events beyond the Colorful Revolution in Macedonia. Foreign meddling, for example, is a common news frame utilized by Sputnik News in their reporting across Eastern Europe and globally. However, there are a few cases in which some of the reporting in English is grounded in discourses that are rather niche to the Balkans. The reporting by Sputnik Srbija (i.e. Sputnik Serbia) in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, on the other hand, is more locally salient to Balkan issues giving a priority to reporting on the region itself.

Furthermore, Sputnik News in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian actively interviews and features opinion pieces by journalists, analysts, and other commentators living and working in the region. As such, the framing in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian makes references to issues which a broader international audience may not understand as they are particularly salient to the Balkan region. In distinguishing itself from other local news media, the Sputnik News BCS edition radio program (which features on their website), highlights that they “say what others keep quiet about.” Yet, the BCS edition of Sputnik News also utilized

global triggers such as “Ukraine” whereas the English edition did not. These differences will be elaborated on here and in the comparative analysis section.

Foreign Meddling Frame

The foreign meddling news frame in Sputnik News’ reporting is operationalized as follows. First, the protests in Macedonia’s Colorful Revolution are themselves framed as the problem. Second, Western actors such as the United States, the European Union, NATO as well as Western civil society organizations are cited as the cause of the protests. These actors are portrayed as supporters of the anti-government protesters as well as the opposition Social Democrats in Macedonia. Third, the articles judge the protests as detrimental to Macedonia’s stability. The protests and the involvement of Western actors are considered a deviation from normalcy. Finally, Sputnik News notes that as a remedy to overcome the situation it is important to respect Macedonia’s law, constitution, and hold elections as soon as possible. Within each of these operationalizations of the news frame (problem, cause, judgement, and remedy) there are a range of framing devices tied to rhetoric and discourse which are employed to better formulate the frame as such.

In describing the protesters of the Colorful Revolution as the problem, Sputnik News’ English reporting used rhetoric that portrayed the protesters as aggressive. For example, references such as “Macedonian Protesters Smash Windows,” “violent demonstrations in the capital Skopje,” and “...supporters of the opposition were trying to break through the police cordons” are common throughout the news stories.¹²² The use of words like “smash,” “violent,” and “break” are utilized to create associations to violence

¹²² *Sputnik News*, “Macedonian Protesters Smash Windows in Presidential Office,” April 13, 2016. <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201604141037966325-macedonia-protest-presidential-office/>; *Sputnik News*, “Macedonia’s President Stands by Pardons as Protests Continue,” April 15, 2016. <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201604151038091514-macedonia-violence-protests/>; *Sputnik News*, “Macedonia Deploys Police Amid Skopje Pro-Government, Opposition Rallies,” April 21 2016. <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201604211038408915-skopje-rallies-police/>.

which is generally perceived negatively. Similarly, in openly stating “supporters of the opposition” rather than the broader “protesters” there is a subtle attempt to connect the violence and protests with the opposition Social Democrats in turn delegitimizing them. Both examples mimic the discourses often utilized in the protest paradigm. Furthermore, what is omitted in this reporting is the violence of and arrests by the police themselves. By using these framing devices, the protests are signified as the problem within the frame. Sputnik News’ reporting in BCS does the same in painting a negative light on the protesters and framing them as the problem. Phrases such as “they threw eggs at Ivanov's office,” “several hundred opposition supporters gathered in downtown Skopje,” and “confrontations with police” feature throughout and serve to paint the protesters negatively while again associating them with the opposition.¹²³

In determining the cause of this problem within the frame Sputnik News’ English reporting focuses on Western involvement highlighting it as intervention and foreign instigation in Macedonia’s internal affairs. The West is clearly defined as the cause of the problem with references such as “The EU and US wants President Ivanov to withdraw his decision” and “...amid increasing pressure from the EU, the US and NATO, who put a strain on the president...” and headlines such as “NATO Pressures Macedonia.”¹²⁴

¹²³ *Sputnik News*, “Napeto u Skoplju: Demonstranti ispred sedišta vladajuće stranke [Tensions in Skopje: Protesters in front of the ruling party's headquarters],” April 12, 2016. <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/201604121104817819-Napeto-u-Skoplju-Demonstranti-ispred-sedista-vladajuće-stranke/>; *Sputnik News*, “Makedonska opozicija: Ivanov izveo državni udar [Macedonian opposition: Ivanov staged a coup],” April 13, 2016. <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/201604131104831862-Makedonija-Ivanov-drzavni-udar/>; Brankica Ristic, “Ko ne želi mir u Makedoniji? (video) [Who does not want peace in Macedonia? (video)],” *Sputnik News*, April 13, 2016. <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/politika/201604131104834961-makedonija-djordje-ivanov-izbori-opoyicija-demonstracije/>.

¹²⁴ *Sputnik News*, “Macedonia Unrest: Protests Resume in Skopje After Easter Break,” May 4, 2016. <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201605041039065422-macedonia-politics-election-protests/>; *Sputnik News*, “NATO Pressures Macedonia as Court Halts June Elections,” May 18, 2016. <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201605181039830551-macedonia-nato-june-elections/>; *Sputnik News*, “Macedonian President Revokes All Political Pardons in Stunning U-Turn,” June 7, 2016. <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201606071040934929-macedonia-revoke-wiretapping-pardons/>.

Through such phrases as “pressure,” “strain,” and “wants” there is a notion that the President is being forced to do something by outsider actors. In this way, Sputnik News’ reporting furthers the frame by elaborating the cause of the problem. In this case, Western involvement, by explicitly mentioning Western governments and organizations such as the US, EU, and NATO.

Sputnik News’ reporting in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian used similar discourses when painting the West as the cause of the problem. Quotes from statements of Russian officials feature more prominently in the BCS news reporting. For example, “... the Macedonian opposition has once again become an instrument for stirring up internal political conflict, this time with foreign support,” “...Russia, which has accused the opposition of escalating violence with the support of ‘foreign factors’,” and a quote from the Russian Ambassador in Skopje who argued that the West’s actions “including overt manipulation of civic movements, can lead to catastrophic and unpredictable consequences, as has happened in other countries, including Ukraine.”¹²⁵ Quoting from officials serves to provide the reporting with legitimacy as is common within the protest paradigm. Furthermore, the use of terms such as “political conflict,” “escalating violence,” “manipulation,” and “stirring up” all serve not only to point the finger at the West, but to highlight the negative impact of the West’s engagement. Similarly, the use of Ukraine and phrases such as “Ukrainian scenario” and “Ukrainization” serve as exemplars which intertextually link the reporting on the situation in Macedonia with that on the Euromaidan protests in Ukraine.¹²⁶ However,

¹²⁵ *Sputnik News*. “Moskva: Nedopustivo aktiviranje „ukrajinskog scenarija“ u Makedoniji [Moscow: Inadmissible activation of the "Ukrainian scenario" in Macedonia],” April 14, 2016, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/rusija/201604141104878350-Makedonija-Rusija-situacija/>; *Sputnik News*, “Skoplje: Bakljama i kamenicama na policiju [Skopje: torches and rocks at the police],” April 14, 2016. <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/201604141104878817-makedonija-opozicija-protest/>; *Sputnik News*, “Makedonija: Ruski ambasador pozvao na zaustavljanje nasilja i tenzija [Macedonia: Russian ambassador calls for end to violence and tension],” April 23, 2016. <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/201604231105107119-Ambasador-Rusije-Makedonija/>.

¹²⁶ *Sputnik News*, “Ukrainian Scenario.”

these references to Ukraine only appear in the opinion pieces of SN's English reporting and not the regular news texts in English despite their salience for an international English-speaking audience. The regular news texts focused on reporting from the ground in turn avoiding mentions of Ukraine. The opinion pieces, on the other hand, included commentary from Sputnik News staff working on topics beyond the Balkans and were thus able to incorporate the Ukraine issue into their discussions. Overall, the frame of foreign meddling has been utilized by other state-owned Russian news outlets in their reporting on the protests in Ukraine in 2013 and 2014 as well as the war in Ukraine.¹²⁷ Despite the English news texts in SN eschewing discourse around a "Ukrainian scenario," the BCS language news texts actively utilized it.

The articles in BCS also more directly target the European Union and Western countries for their purported meddling in Macedonia. A misleading headline such as "EU: We won't recognize the winner of the Macedonian elections" clearly served to directly smear the European Union as undemocratic.¹²⁸ Similar such references include "The European Union may consider imposing sanctions such as travel bans and property freezes on Macedonian politicians who are obstructing the country's political crisis" and "The German envoy Johannes Heindl arrived in Skopje, and the arrival of the American representative Victoria Nuland was announced in a few days, which is interpreted in the Skopje media as new, increased pressure..."¹²⁹ Both of these not only portend to show the

¹²⁷ Kohei Watanabe, "Measuring News Bias: Russia's Official News Agency ITAR-TASS' Coverage of the Ukraine Crisis," *European Journal of Communication* 32, no. 3 (June 1, 2017): 224–41; Galina Miazhevich, "Russia Today's Coverage of Euromaidan," *Russian Journal of Communication* 6, no. 2 (May 4, 2014): 186–91.

¹²⁸ *Sputnik News*, "EU: Nećemo priznati pobjednika makedonskih izbora [EU: We won't recognize the winner of the Macedonian elections]," May 17, 2016. <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/evropa/201605171105758807-EU-nece-priznati-pobjednika-makedonskih-izbora/>.

¹²⁹ *Sputnik News*, "EU uvodi sankcije makedonskim političarima? [EU imposes sanctions on Macedonian politicians?]," April 21, 2016. <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/201604211105067411-EU-uvodi-sankcije-makedonskim-politicarima/>; *Sputnik News*, "Zapad pritiska Skoplje da izađe iz krize [The West is

EU harming Macedonian politicians with travel bans and freezing their property, but also directly names Western government officials as applying pressure on internal Macedonian politics.

Sputnik News' English reporting similarly presents the judgement within this foreign meddling frame by noting an uncertain future as well as a potential loss of statehood and identity in Macedonia. Statements that display such sentiments include:

If Washington's involvement is a continuation of its support for the Macedonian opposition intended to undermine Russia's influence, then the current political crisis will only deepen after the December elections. In other words, if the US-backed parties win, Washington will have another "satellite" in the region.¹³⁰

As such, according to the frame, Macedonia will no longer be a sovereign country, but a "satellite" and the crisis affecting the country will only "deepen." Direct references, in the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language edition of Sputnik News, to stability and the impact the situation in Macedonia could have across the entire Balkan region also furthered the frame's negative judgement.

Finally, this foreign meddling frame includes a remedy that promotes the importance of Macedonian laws, the constitution, and respect for the elected government led by VMRO-DPMNE. The Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian edition of Sputnik News does this effectively with phrases such as "Ivanov continues to refuse to accept Western ambassadors..."¹³¹ Furthermore, it quotes Russian officials who claim a resolution to the situation will come "...by respecting the actions and decisions of the legitimate authorities

pressuring Skopje to get out of crisis]," July 6, 2016. <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/201607061107028289-Zapad-pritiska/>.

¹³⁰ *Sputnik News*, "Macedonia's Main Political Parties Agree to Hold Snap Elections," July 23, 2016. <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201607231043514869-macedonia-parties-elections/>

¹³¹ *Sputnik News*, "Protesti, tuče i neredi u Skoplju i Bitolju (video, foto) [Protests, fights and riots in Skopje and Bitola (video, photo)]," April 13, 2016. <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/201604131104846157-protesti-u-Skoplju-u-Bitolju-tuce-i-incidenti/>

and leadership of Macedonia.”¹³² Through this President Ivanov is seen as pushing back against Western encroachment and the use of terms such as “legitimate,” “authorities,” and “leadership” seek to create a positive image of the government in turn delegitimizing the protesters. The second frame of ethnic conflict and regional destabilization follows a similar pattern.

Ethnic Conflict and Regional Destabilization Frame

Sputnik News’ reporting operationalizes the ethnic conflict and regional destabilization frame in the following way. Again, the protests are denoted as the problem. However, rather than Western foreign meddling and intervention as the cause, this time it is ethnic minorities that are portrayed as the instigators. This is again judged as something bad for the country with repeated references to attacks on Macedonia’s sovereignty. Finally, the news frame is completed with arguments calling for respect of the law and a continuation of the current VMRO-DPMNE government’s rule to remedy the situation.

As was the case in the foreign meddling frame, the protests themselves are labeled as the problem. However, the cause now focuses on ethnic minorities in Macedonia. In particular, an English-language SN article describes a speech given by President Gjorge Ivanov who “... believes it's possible that the Balkan countries could be exposed to terrorist attacks...”¹³³ The article then goes on to note that “Kosovo, the breakaway region of Serbia on Macedonia's border, has been called a ‘fertile ground for ISIS (Daesh)’ by the *New York Times*... Residents of Kosovo are predominantly ethnically Albanian and Muslim. Approximately one quarter of Macedonians were Albanian Muslims ...” In quoting President Ivanov and making claims which tie ethnic Albanians with ISIS and terrorism,

¹³² Sputnik News, “Ukrainian Scenario.”

¹³³ *Sputnik News*, “Macedonian President Braces for Terrorist Attacks in Balkans,” July 28, 2016, <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201607281043699655-macedonia-terrorism-daesh-balkan/>

Sputnik News' English edition is conjuring violence and adding it into the mix making the situation seem more volatile than it was. Furthermore, SN is connecting the protests and Ivanov's security concerns through catchphrases such as "ISIS" and "terrorism" to a topic that a broader, international, and English-speaking audience can understand. While the protests are often seen as a legitimate form of expression, terrorism is more of a national threat dealt with by the state. Through this framing, the VMRO-DPMNE government is also afforded legitimacy to deal with the problem. Creating a security concern, such as terrorism, and tying it to an ethnic minority serves to obfuscate from the fact that protesters are in the street demanding the resignation of the government after revelations of corruption.

Sputnik News's Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language edition also plays on this theme of connecting ethnic Albanians to terrorism. However, it does it more often and in a more direct manner. For example, an article notes that "[t]he porous political situation in Macedonia and the extremist Albanian groups in Kosovo that continue to support the idea of a 'Greater Albania' could be a new spark in the region."¹³⁴ The use of the term "extremist" clearly ties this into the discourse on terrorism. The article goes on to note "This terrorist organization was already mentioned as the organizer of the attack in Kumanovo in Macedonia last year..." Again, the terrorism discourse is furthered and with the reference to Kumanovo (where a deadly confrontation between an armed Albanian group and the Macedonian police took place in 2015) SN is intertextually connecting the current news to that particular moment. In fact, the trial of those involved in the skirmish in Kumanovo has been ongoing and plagued with a lack of facts as to what really happened. Despite this, Sputnik News in BCS takes the official line offered by the VMRO-DPMNE

¹³⁴ Brankica Ristic, "Albanski teroristi se grupišu za napad (video) [Albanian terrorists group up for attack (video)]," *Sputnik News*, April 15, 2016, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/politika/201604151104896709-pristina-teroristi-ana-ovk-nato-srbi-napadi/>

government that these were members of a terrorist group that were going to attack various sites across Macedonia. However, unlike the English edition of Sputnik News, the BCS edition vaguely uses terrorism in referencing ethnic Albanians and the former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and avoids bringing up ISIS as was the case in English. This is done because referencing the KLA is more salient to a Balkan audience whereas references to ISIS are more applicable to an international, English speaking audience.

The first article also mentioned “Greater Albania” while other articles describe some of the protests noting that “One of the banners reads ‘Albania, where are you, Ilirida is burning for you.’”¹³⁵ These references to Greater Albania are more locally salient rather than something a global audience would be familiar with (although they appear in Sputnik News’ English-language opinion pieces as will be discussed below). Greater Albania refers to the idea that ethnic Albanians in the Balkans – particularly in Kosovo, but also Macedonia, Montenegro, and Greece – want to break away from these countries and join Albania into a larger homogenously ethnic Albanian state. Most nations in the region have such mythological claims to a larger territory encompassing their ethnic brethren (for example Greater Serbia, Greater Macedonia, Greater Bulgaria, etc.) and the threat of such claims is often used to cause fear in other countries that they will lose part of their land. These references are something which ethnic Macedonians will quickly pick up on and view negatively. Thus, connecting the protests to this idea of a Greater Albania, as well as “Ilirida” - which refers specifically to the idea of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia seceding to form their own state, can be seen as a way to delegitimize the protests themselves and even arouse ethnic conflict. Furthermore, as the December 2016 elections neared ethnic

¹³⁵ Sputnik News, “Terrorist Attacks.”; *Sputnik News*, “Skoplje: Završen protest veterana OVK (foto) [Skopje: KLA veterans protest over (photo)],” April 22, 2016, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/201604221105089439-Skoplje-Veliki-protest-veterana-OVK/>

Albanian politicians were targeted in further attempts to stir ethnic division. The ethnic Albanian Democratic Union for Integration was the focal point for two articles. Their headlines are indicative of the message they try to signal: “Skeletons in the yard of the leader of Macedonia's strongest Albanian party” and “Scandal in Skopje: Albanian party official chants KLA.”¹³⁶ The first clearly seeks to paint Ali Ahmeti as a criminal or even murderer whereas the second attempts to arouse fears about the role of the Kosovo Liberation Army and potential separatist discourses in Macedonia.

In providing a moral judgement and remedy for the frame – Sputnik News’ English-language reporting focuses on the role of Nikola Gruevski. Quotes of claims made by former Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski feature throughout. One article notes that “Gruevski always insisted the wiretapping allegations were invented to destabilize the government...” while another reiterates that Gruevski “...says the surveillance tapes were ‘fabricated’ to destabilize the country and subsequent anti-government movements are supported by a US and EU-led agenda.”¹³⁷ This discourse serves to judge the situation in line with Gruevski’s views that the protests are destabilizing Macedonia. This is matched up with the same remedy as in the foreign meddling frame that offers legitimacy to the VMRO-DPMNE government, but this time with statements arguing that the government has the ability to stop imminent terrorist attacks on its own territory. This proffering of legitimacy to the government coincides with the law and order frame in Sputnik News’ reporting.

¹³⁶ *Sputnik News*, “Skeleti u dvorištu lidera najjače albanske partije u Makedoniji [Skeletons in the yard of the leader of Macedonia's strongest Albanian party],” October 10, 2016, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/201610101108427811-Skeleti-Ali-Ahmeti1/>.; *Sputnik News*, “Skandal u Skoplju: Funkcioner albanske stranke skandirao OVK [Scandal in Skopje: Albanian party official chants KLA],” November 21, 2016, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/201611211108935713-skandal-skoplje-skandiranje-ovk/>.

¹³⁷ *Sputnik News*, “Protests Continue.”; *Sputnik News* “Protests Easter Break.”

Law and Order Frame

The third frame which Sputnik News' reporting on the Colorful Revolution in Macedonia employs is that of law and order. This frame is operationalized as follows: (1) the problem is again the protests led by the Colorful Revolution; (2) the cause is again the West and civil society groups; and (3) the moral judgement is again that this will be negative for the future of Macedonia. However, the remedy is focused on the role of President Ivanov and his constitutional authorities.

Sputnik News' English reporting, rather than paint President Ivanov and his decision to issue pardons as the cause of the Colorful Revolution – portrays the President favorably as a symbol of law and order in the country. References such as “Ivanov signed a decree to halt all the legal proceedings against the country’s politicians with an aim to end the political crisis in the country” feature throughout.¹³⁸ In fact, President Ivanov is highlighted in the headline of five of Sputnik News' English-language online stories and is directly quoted in even more stories. This is coupled with statements such as “...respect for the actions of the Macedonian authorities,” and references to “the Constitutional Court,” that note the importance of the constitution.¹³⁹ Through this formulation of a remedy to the situation Sputnik News actively affords legitimacy to President Ivanov and the ruling VMRO-DPMNE government more broadly. In particular, the use of catchphrases such as “decree,” “authorities,” and “Constitutional Court” seek to extend legitimacy to the President and the VMRO-DPMNE government. Sputnik News' English-language reporting actively omits references to the Special Prosecutor's Office as an institution with authority thus providing President Ivanov more legitimacy

¹³⁸ Sputnik News, “Protesters Smash Windows.”

¹³⁹ *Sputnik News*, “Russia Concerned About Political Crisis in Macedonia,” April 14, 2016, <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201604141038005223-russia-macedonia-concern-protests/>; *Sputnik News*, “Macedonian Constitutional Court to Prepare for Parliamentary Elections,” May 18, 2016, <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201605181039817383-macedonia-constitutional-court-parliamentary/>.

Sputnik News' reporting in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian features similar attempts at giving legitimacy to the Macedonian government. In fact, the statements are more direct in their affirmation of the government than those in the English version. For example, references to the "constitutional and legal framework of Macedonia" and similar phrases feature in multiple articles.¹⁴⁰ Another article features President Ivanov flexing his authority with the headline: "Ivanov: I could have called in the army..."¹⁴¹ Another yet, notes how "... groups close to VMRO-DPMNE demanded a ban on non-governmental organizations, accusing them of 'acting against the constitutional order of Macedonia'".¹⁴² This juxtaposes the presentation of the government as legitimate with the supposed foreign meddling of non-governmental organizations in Macedonia. Finally, another category of articles seeks to promote former Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski. One article, for example, describes the specifics of the technical government in Macedonia and how it was prolonged due to impediments to hold elections, arguing that "if the ministers from Gruevski's government have been returned, then it is logical for Gruevski to return to the post of prime minister."¹⁴³ Another article centers completely around Gruevski and is titled "Gruevski threatens Zaev: If Goce Delcev were alive..."¹⁴⁴ The article goes on to state that "The leader of the ruling party in Macedonia, VMRO-DPMNE, Nikola Gruevski, sharply attacked his rival, the first man of the opposition, Zoran Zaev, telling his supporters that

¹⁴⁰ Sputnik News, "Macedonia: Russian Ambassador."

¹⁴¹ *Sputnik News*, "Ivanov: Mogao sam da pošaljem vojsku ili da aboliram [Ivanov: I could have called in the army or done the pardons]," June 23, 2016, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/201606231106695715-Ivanov-mogao-sam-da-saljemo-vojsku-ili-da-aboliram/>

¹⁴² Sputnik News, "Skopje: torches and rocks at the police."

¹⁴³ Brankica Ristic, "Gruevski ponovo premijer Makedonije? [Gruevski Prime Minister of Macedonia again?]," *Sputnik News*, May 19, 2016, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/201605191105807707-makedonija-opozicija-izbori-parlament/>.

¹⁴⁴ *Sputnik News*, "Gruevski preti Zaevu: Da je živ Goce Delčev... [Gruevski threatens Zaev: If Goce Delchev were alive...]," December 7, 2016, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/regioni/201612071109152549-gruevski-zaev-delcev/>

Goce Delcev, if he were alive, would send his chief executor to "finish the show"." In other words, Gruevski paints Zaev as anti-Macedonian and that the founding father of Macedonia in the 19th century would execute Zoran Zaev. This type of sensationalist discourse feature prominently throughout Sputnik News' opinion pieces in both language services.

Opinion Pieces in Sputnik News

The previous descriptions of the three frames in Sputnik News' English and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language focused on news reports. As such, it avoided discussing the various opinion pieces or commentaries that were published in the same period. Compared to Deutsche Welle, Sputnik News relied more heavily on opinion pieces or guest commentaries to further the frames that were utilized. In this way, more unsubstantiated, biased, or extreme viewpoints were included and served to present the frame in a more direct manner. Additionally, any attribution that such statements were made by Sputnik News directly or by Russian government officials could be avoided. In turn, it allowed SN to maintain a façade of credibility while still publishing such commentary.

The foreign meddling frame, in identifying the West as the cause of the problem (the protests), relied heavily on commentary in both English and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian. For example, in Sputnik News' English reporting, statements from opinion pieces such as "US' second regime change operation against the Republic of Macedonia" and "U.S. ambassador Jess Baily is complicit in all of this" serve to directly incriminate the United States as influencing and even orchestrating the protests.¹⁴⁵ Here, key terms such as "regime change" seek to connect Western actors with the protests in turn delegitimizing

¹⁴⁵ Andrew Korbyko, "Saudis and 9/11, Israel and Occupied Golan, Macedonia and Regime Change," *Sputnik News*, April 22, 2016, https://sputniknews.com/radio_context_countdown/201604221038442426-saudi-arabia-911-israel-golan-macedonia/; 5422

them. The interviews and opinion pieces in the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language version of SN take these claims and further them even more. For example, one opinion piece argues that the situation in Macedonia is just "...another experiment by the international community that has full control over the political processes in Macedonia" and that some political parties in the country operate "...exclusively under the direction of the American Embassy."¹⁴⁶ Another piece highlights that the "...international community, led by America and Germany, has decided to take matters into its own hands."¹⁴⁷

Similarly, other opinion pieces in SN's English version go beyond just implicating Western governments, but also civil society groups. For example, "In Macedonia, Soros and USAID finance the 'fighters' from Canvas and the Sorosites from 'Open Society'..."¹⁴⁸ Another commentary, which refers to an opinion piece written in a domestic Russian news outlet, argues that

... a number of OSF (referring to Open Society Foundation) inner documents were stolen by hackers and published on the internet. In particular, they describe the strategy of mass protests in Macedonia. For example, the strategy included staging street protests, training activists, organizing public discussions etc...¹⁴⁹

The article then goes on to list how "US institutions" including "the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the

¹⁴⁶ *Sputnik News*, "Albanci će presuditi u krizi u Makedoniji [Albanians will decide the crisis in Macedonia]," April 22, 2016, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/komentari/201604221105083765-Albanci-ce-presuditi-u-krizi-u-Makedoniji/>; *Sputnik News*, "Koji će boju dobiti makedonska „šarena revolucija“? [What color will the Macedonian "Colorful Revolution" get?]," May 13, 2016, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/analize/201605131105642850-Makedonija-revolucija-sarena-obojena/>.

¹⁴⁷ Brankica Ristic, "Makedonija neće biti protektorat kao Kosovo i BiH [Macedonia won't be a protectorate like Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina]," *Sputnik News*, July 6, 2016, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/analize/201607061107053061-makedonija-situacija-politika/>.

¹⁴⁸ Sergey Stokan and Andrew Korbyko, "Macedonia: New Color Revolution in the Balkans," *Sputnik News*, April 29, 2016, https://sputniknews.com/radio_red_line/201604291038852238-macedonia-new-color-revolution/.

¹⁴⁹ *Sputnik News*, "Is Macedonia Becoming Hotbed in Geopolitical Standoff Between West and Russia?," August 18, 2016, <https://sputniknews.com/politics/201608181044399318-macedonia-crisis-russia-west/>.

US embassy and some others” are engaging in this strategy. These references to “Soros” and “Canvas” serve not only as catchphrases familiar to those following the Balkans, but to a broader international audience. George Soros has become the ultimate boogeyman around the world and the work of his Open Society Foundation has been criticized by Russia and other countries for “intervening” in the internal affairs of other countries. Canvas is much more locally salient to the Balkans as it refers to the group that helped organize the protests in Serbia in 2000 that came to be known as the Bulldozer Revolution. The fact that Canvas is referenced in the English version of Sputnik News rather than in BCS is peculiar. The reason that this happened is that many of the English version opinion pieces in Sputnik News seek to get in touch with people in Macedonia. As such, the references and discourses of those in Macedonia are more locally salient rather than targeted to an English-speaking international audience. As such, locally salient discourses from the Balkans – such as those on Canvas – make their way into the English edition via quoting. In fact, in this case, the English-language opinion pieces referenced a local Macedonian journalist who mentioned Canvas in their statements. Similar references to non-governmental organizations are common in Russian state-media as well as domestic media in the Macedonia that seek to target civil society groups funded by the West. USAID and Open Society are among the biggest Western donors funding civil society groups in the world.

The opinion pieces and interviews in the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian version again go even further. For example, in one interview a Macedonian journalist claims that the “US Ambassador hits hard. Buys people. Travels around Macedonia with a suitcase of money and funds NGOs and Soros organizations.” In another interview, Andrew Korbiko from Sputnik News’ English edition argues that:

The ground for the latest events in Macedonia, as well as in the rest of the Balkans, has been prepared by non-governmental organizations, but for now, the Macedonian authorities are holding up well. The causes for the West's unrest and destabilization of Macedonia should be sought in the growing economic and political influence of Russia and China in the Balkan countries.¹⁵⁰

This statement not only ties the purported foreign meddling of Western countries to non-governmental organizations but connects the foreign meddling frame to that of destabilization. In providing a remedy in most of the frames as well as the general sentiments of the law and order frame, SN used opinion pieces in both English and BCS to positively portray the Macedonian government and President. For example, in an interview in English one of the guests references a Macedonian journalist who talked about the “democratically elected and legitimate and very popular Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski” and claimed that Macedonian president Gjorge Ivanov was “the only functional official with Constitutional prerogatives.”¹⁵¹ The terms – “democratic,” “elected,” “legitimate,” “popular,” “functional,” “official,” and “constitutional” – associated with political legitimacy are utilized to further the argument that the status quo of the ruling political party is needed to resolve the crisis in Macedonia. In this way Sputnik News’ opinion pieces complement the foreign meddling frame which constructs the protests as a problem created by Western foreign interference that can only be resolved by respecting the laws and legitimacy of the current VMRO-DPMNE government.

Finally, the framing of ethnic minorities – particularly ethnic Albanians – as a cause of the problems is the most common feature in both the English and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian opinion pieces that Sputnik News published. Oddly, references to “Greater Albania” feature in numerous English-language interviews and opinion pieces. For example, the “threat of Greater Albania,” “one step closer to a Great Albania supported

¹⁵⁰ Andrew Korbyko, “Macedonia and Regime Change.”

¹⁵¹ Ibid; Stokan and Korbyko, “Macedonia Color Revolution.”

by the West,” “... Albanian-majority cities in occupied Kosovo, the Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, and Montenegro are joining with Tirana to form the so-called Union of Albanian Municipalities” and the notion that Macedonia may “become federalized and eventually be partitioned between Albania and Bulgaria.”¹⁵² What’s peculiar about this is the fact that the concept of a Greater Albania is a very locally salient issue to the Balkans, as was previously described, and likely doesn’t resonate with an international English-speaking audience as say the discourses surrounding terrorism might. In fact, looking at both regular news texts and opinion pieces in English, references to Greater Albania and similar terms feature more often than do references connecting Albanians to ISIS and terrorism. The reason for this, again, is that a Macedonian journalist is a guest on a podcast and so they are using locally salient language to describe the situation. Yet, non-Balkan individuals such as the host of a podcast – Andrew Korbiko – also makes references to Greater Albania in English and when interviewed for Sputnik News in BCS. As such, it is likely that Sputnik News, in gathering opinion pieces, does not cater to specific audiences and overtly uses broad strokes to further its frames. However, as the next section will show, Russian officials including Foreign Minister Lavrov have referred to Greater Albania in interviews and official statements regarding the protests in Macedonia. As such, Sputnik News may deem the references applicable for use across language services.

The commentaries in the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian edition of Sputnik News take framing of ethnic division and pointing the finger at Albanians to an extreme. Statements in that vein include:

¹⁵² Stokan and Korbyko, “Macedonia Color Revolution.”; Andrew Korbyko, “US-Cuba Deal After Fidel, ‘PropOrNot’ Jumps the Shark, Ugandan Unrest,” *Sputnik News*, December 4, 2016, https://sputniknews.com/radio_context_countdown/201612021048092457-us-cuba-deal-after-fidel-ugandan-unrest/; Andrew Korbyko, “Macedonia and Regime Change.”

“Albanians taking to the streets reveals the true nature of the opposition protests, but also leads to chaos in Macedonia”¹⁵³

“It will become a kind of federation of Albanians and Macedonians; Greater Albania will become a reality in Macedonia, and Macedonians will get their own Kosovo.”¹⁵⁴

“...in all our countries, traitors and mercenaries and Shiptars [ethnic slur for Albanians], which the Americans turn on and off when it suits them...”¹⁵⁵

“The main cause of instability in Macedonia are Albanians...”¹⁵⁶

The use of terms such as “chaos,” “federation,” “traitors and mercenaries,” and “instability” are all signaling not only ethnic conflict, but also the loss of Macedonian statehood due to federalization. These catchphrases are locally salient for ethnic Macedonians and are used to stir up animosity toward ethnic Albanians. However, these locally salient discourses surrounding ethnic problems in Macedonia also find their way into statements given by Russian officials.

COMPARISON WITH OFFICIAL RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENTS

As was the case with statements from Germany’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the statements from Russian officials map on and imitate the frames that were utilized in Sputnik News’ reporting. For example, with regard to the foreign meddling frame, a Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement released just two days after Macedonian

¹⁵³ Sputnik News, “Albanians will decide.”

¹⁵⁴ Uroš Bobić, “U Srbiji deluju i NVO i strane špijunske službe [NGOs and foreign spy services operate in Serbia],” *Sputnik News*, April 25, 2016, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/intervju/201604251105173107-koribko-novinar-nvo-srbija-sluzbe/>.

¹⁵⁵ Nikola Joksimović, “Tamni oblaci sa Zapada nad Balkanom [Dark clouds from the West over the Balkans],” *Sputnik News*, May 31, 2016, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/analize/201605311106107768-obojene-revolucije-balkan-makedonija-crna-gora-srbija-republika-srpska/>.

¹⁵⁶ Nenad Zorić, “Makedonija: Pomaže li Zapad ispod žita „veliku Albaniju“ [Macedonia: Is the West helping "Greater Albania" under the radar],” *Sputnik News*, June 7, 2016, <https://rs-lat.sputniknews.com/analize/201606071106295230-pomaze-li-zapad-veliku-albaniju/>.

President Ivanov announced his pardons, read: “We state that the Macedonian opposition has again become a tool for instigating, including with external support, an internal political conflict to disrupt an early election scheduled for June 5, 2016, which is seen as the only democratic legitimate way to end the protracted crisis.”¹⁵⁷ Another statement in July 2016 states: “Using the same tried and tested schemes with the involvement of an ‘aggressive minority’ that has been paid from the outside, the ground is being prepared for provoking another colour revolution, this time in Macedonia.”¹⁵⁸ Clearly, both Russian officials and Sputnik News utilize the frame of foreign meddling and promote a narrative of Western interference (and attempts at regime change) in Macedonia.

Similarly, the ethnic conflict and destabilization frame is also utilized. A press statement from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on April 14, 2016 states that “We consider it inadmissible to shake the fragile situation in Macedonia, which is rooted in the complicated ethnic and religious structure of that country... attempts to inspire illegal actions and a coup d’état from the outside are fraught with deep shocks for Macedonia and destabilisation for the Balkans.”¹⁵⁹ This in a way blends both the ethnic conflict issues and those of foreign meddling as leading to destabilization for Macedonia – something which was repeated over and over in Sputnik News’ reporting in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian. Furthermore, a press release of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s interview in Belgrade with Sputnik News’ Serbian-language edition, notes Minister Lavrov stating “I have also heard about another project based on quite a negative idea. It is called Project of Albanian Municipalities and consists of the municipalities of Albania, Pristina, Macedonia,

¹⁵⁷ “Comment by the Information and Press Department on the Situation in Macedonia.” https://www.mid.ru/kommentarii_predstavatelya/-/asset_publisher/MCZ7HQuMdqBY/content/id/2233994.

¹⁵⁸ “Briefing by Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova, Republic of Crimea of the Russian Federation, July 7, 2016.” https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2348943.

¹⁵⁹ “Comment by the Information and Press Department on the Situation in Macedonia.” https://www.mid.ru/kommentarii_predstavatelya/-/asset_publisher/MCZ7HQuMdqBY/content/id/2233994.

Montenegro and Presevo Valley forming an association. If this is not the same old idea of creating a Greater Albania, our EU colleagues should probably be more far-sighted.”¹⁶⁰ In essence, Lavrov is arguing that the EU supports Greater Albania and as such is making a direct reference to locally salient issues of borders and ethnic divisions while also bringing in the role of Western actors.

Finally, references related to the law and order frame are also made directly by the Russian foreign ministry and Russian Embassy in Skopje in their statements during the Colorful Revolution. Russian Ambassador Oleg Shcherbak in an interview openly stated that “Our top priority, which we don’t disguise, is to preserve the peace, stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Macedonia.”¹⁶¹ This statement can be seen as pandering to those who believe that if the VMRO-DPMNE is removed from power these issues – sovereignty and territorial integrity – will be jeopardized. In the same statement Shcherbak goes on to say that:

we strictly adhere to the principle of mutual respect and equal rights in our relations with Macedonia, which a priori means respect for your country’s law, as well as the moves and decisions taken by its leaders and legitimate authorities.... we call on all political parties to... resolve the crisis in compliance with the existing constitutional legal framework of Macedonia... We should not forget that non-interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign states is a highly important principle of modern international law, and violating this principle is unacceptable and destructive. Macedonia should not be an exception in this respect.

Over and over this trope of constitutionality and the law is expressed in official statements to grant more legitimacy to the government in power at the time. Other such statements include “respect for the moves and decisions taken by the legitimate authorities

¹⁶⁰ “Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s Interview with Sputnik News Agency, Belgrade, December 12, 2016.” https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2561259.

¹⁶¹ “Interview of Russian Ambassador to Macedonia Oleg Shcherbak with the Newspaper Nova Makedonija, Published April 23, 2016.” https://www.mid.ru/maps/mk/-/asset_publisher/Bx11WHr8ws3J/content/id/2249465.

and Government of Macedonia” and “We call on the country’s political forces to respect the will of the electorate and to act strictly within the constitutional framework to preclude any counterproductive external influence on the formation of the new cabinet.” Again here, there is a blending and intertwining of the frames. The frame emphasizing the rule of law is tied to that of foreign meddling with the latter seen as a negative influence upon the former.

Comparative Analysis

This section will explore some of the similarities and differences between the reporting of the two international broadcasters. Overall, some of the same issues or topics which are discussed – such as ethnic minorities, the Special Prosecutor’s Office, corruption, and others – are framed in drastically different ways by Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News.

As was noted earlier, DW actively reported on instances of ethnic unity during the Colorful Revolution protests. Individuals of various ethnic backgrounds (Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Roma, Serbs, etc.) were all coming together in a united way to protest for a new Macedonia. DW openly referenced how the term “colorful” was also a synonym for diversity – including ethnic diversity. On the other hand, Sputnik News pushed forward a frame of ethnic conflict in its reporting. Discussions about Albanians, Greater Albania, terrorists, criminals based in neighboring Kosovo, federalization, and partition featured prominently in SN’s English-language reporting. Sputnik News’ reporting in BCS went even further and discussed how Albanians were seeking to overthrow the constitutional order of Macedonia, how they are backed by the United States in these efforts, directly quoted individuals using ethnic slurs about Albanians, and reported on multiple protests led by Albanians. This sought to trigger negative reactions on the part of Macedonians and further the divide between the two groups in the country. These trigger words tie into locally salient narratives of purported Western support for Muslims (Albanians and Bosnians) in the Balkans during the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo at the detriment of Slavic populations.

However, both Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News negatively framed the ethnic Albanian Democratic Union for Integration party and its leader Ali Ahmeti. Deutsche

Welle tied Ahmeti to the VMRO-DPMNE government by noting how the DUI's coalition with VMRO-DPMNE enabled both parties to capture the state and establish an autocratic regime. Sputnik News on the other hand avoided connecting DUI to the VMRO-DPMNE as this would delegitimize the government. Instead, it framed Ahmeti and the DUI within the ethnic conflict frame and portrayed them as anti-Macedonian, criminal, or supporters of a Greater Albania. For example, as was noted earlier, one article was exclusively about how human bones were found in the front yard of Ali Ahmeti. Another article discussed how Ahmeti's deputy Artan Grubi chanted about the Kosovo Liberation Army in the run up to the elections. Despite both broadcasters framing Ahmeti and the DUI negatively – the way in which this was accomplished differed in order to further the specific frames each broadcaster utilized.

The Special Prosecutor's Office and their work, on the other hand, was framed in an opposite manner by the two broadcasters. Deutsche Welle heavily reported on the institution in both English and Macedonian for reasons that have been described earlier. This reporting was overwhelmingly favorable toward the institution – both as an important step in the EU accession process as well as in providing justice and accountability in Macedonia. However, Sputnik News rarely mentioned the institution in either English or Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian. When it was mentioned it was tangentially related to the main topic of an article or it was delegitimized as a Western backed institution. The fact that references to the institution feature so little is odd even though President Ivanov's pardoning of individuals under investigation by the Special Prosecutor is what sparked the protests is surprising. The reason for this is twofold. First, Sputnik News' reporting and frames focused on the importance of President Ivanov's pardons and his goal of ending political division in Macedonia through the pardons. Thus, reporting on the Special Prosecutor's Office would work against furthering the law and order frame that gave

Ivanov legitimacy. Second, Sputnik News may have avoided negative reporting on the institution because it was in fact approved overwhelmingly by both the parliamentary majority comprised of VMRO-DPMNE and DUI as well as the opposition Social Democrats. Delegitimizing the Special Prosecutor's Office would also put into question the decision by the VMRO-DPMNE government to formally approve the institution.

The issue of corruption is another case where there was a drastic difference in framing. Deutsche Welle reported on corruption considerably throughout its coverage and presented it as a major problem or cause in all the frames. References to the VMRO-DPMNE government's abuse of power and how Macedonian citizens reacted to that were common for Deutsche Welle in both English and Macedonian. In English, this abuse of power was framed as detrimental to Macedonia's accession into the EU whereas in Macedonian it was about how it impacted democracy and the everyday livelihood of the average citizen. Sputnik News, on the other hand, overall avoided the topic, but when corruption was covered it described the corruption of the opposition SDSM to make the negative image of the VMRO-DPMNE government relative. For example, when a news text would reference the fact that individuals from the VMRO-DPMNE were pardoned, Sputnik News would also highlight that Zoran Zaev, leader of the opposition, was also pardoned. Zoran Zaev was pardoned in 2008 by then SDSM President Branko Crvenkovski after he was charged on corruption charges related to his time as Mayor of Strumica. The SDSM protested the charges in 2008 claiming they were politically motivated. Regardless, Sputnik News was making the case that VMRO-DPMNE officials were under investigation, but so too are many from the opposition. This is a common practice in Macedonian news media where the misbehavior of one political party's elected officials are compared to those of another party. In turn, politicians of all colors are presented as "all the same" and the discourse avoids conversations of their actual (and relative) crimes.

Another element which was framed differently was the discourse around the protests. Deutsche Welle was reporting on why the protesters were demonstrating, what their demands were, and what they hoped to achieve. Furthermore, the protesters were portrayed as peaceful and as legitimate in taking the actions they did. On the other hand, Sputnik News never mentioned the Colorful Revolution's demands but instead focused on how the protesters' actions were detrimental for Macedonia. DW was fulfilling its mission in reporting on the protesters calling for democracy as positive in that it aligned with the normative values of democracy and human rights which are fundamental to German foreign policy. Similarly, SN was in line with official Russian statements regarding the protests and thus portraying the government favorably while delegitimizing the protests. However, while Sputnik News framed the protests as negative, their reporting did not highlight the GDOM movement which supported the VMRO-DPMNE government. Interestingly, Deutsche Welle in both English and Macedonian offered more coverage of the pro-government GDOM movement than did Sputnik News. It may be that Sputnik News was following closely Russian official statements on the protests which focused on the legitimacy of the VMRO-DPMNE government rather than giving support to GDOM and as such they avoided discussing the counter-protest movement. Similarly, it may be that because none of the opinion pieces or commentaries by Macedonians for SN mentioned GDOM the outlet shied away from discussing it.

Another major difference between the two broadcasters was the way in which they presented their online news. Deutsche Welle, in both English and Macedonian, listed the journalist(s), writer(s), or source(s) (if from another news service, etc.) as the author for almost all their articles. Sputnik News, on the other hand, in both English and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, almost never listed any author for most of their news items. Only when a news text was an opinion piece did they do so, but even then, in most cases

the opinion pieces and commentaries listed no author. While publishing news without an author is an unfortunate journalistic practice for much online news in Eastern Europe there usually is an author listed for opinion pieces and commentaries. Again, as noted earlier, the fact that there no authors listed may be an indication that Sputnik News did not want particular claims in the pieces to be attributable to specific individuals, but to the broader institution as a whole.

Another difference was in the broadcasters' commemorative news articles. For example, Deutsche Welle ran a piece in Macedonian marking the one-year anniversary of the anti-government protest and government crackdown which took place on May 5, 2015 in the aftermath of the revelations about the VMRO-DPMNE government's role in the cover-up of the murder of a young man named Martin Neskovski. This was framed as a commemoration of that protest moment and how the protests in 2016 trace their roots from that particular event. This served as an intertextual link between DW's news writing during the Colorful Revolution and prior protest moments in Macedonia. Sputnik News, on the other hand, in keeping with the ethnic conflict frame commemorated the one-year anniversary of the clash between an ethnic Albanian armed group and government forces in Kumanovo on May 9 and 10, 2015. Just as in the case of DW, Sputnik News framed this in a commemorative manner and discussed how nothing had changed since the incident, how no one had been tried, and how families were still mourning the loss of their loved ones. Both of these commemorative articles furthered respective frames by each broadcaster. DW was able to further its favorable coverage of the protests whereas SN kept up with the theme of ethnic conflict.

Finally, it is clear that both Sputnik News and Deutsche Welle – as seen in the comparisons with official statements – generally reflected the official policy of their respective country toward the protests in Macedonia. Deutsche Welle's reporting on the

protests gave them visibility, provided a platform for the voices of protesters, examined the problems facing the country, and offered legitimacy to the Special Prosecutor's Office. This is in line with both Germany's engagement with Macedonia during this time (through EU mediation efforts as well as the appointment of Haindl) as well as DW's mission as an international broadcaster – to give voice to youth and promote democratic values. Sputnik News also toed the line with Russian official statements in coverage of the Colorful Revolution. SN focused on negatively portraying the protesters, discussing minority issues that could stir up ethnic conflict, and offered legitimacy to the VMRO-DPMNE government. However, rather than just getting those sentiments across in articles as DW did, it more often directly quoted statements by various Russian officials (Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zakharova, Foreign Minister Lavrov, Ambassador Scherbak). Overall, these findings suggest that while international broadcasters may frame news events in favor of their respective country's foreign policies, the way in which the events are framed and how drastically differs from institution to institution.

Conclusion

Despite the global dominance of social media platforms as a major news source; international broadcasting is not going away anytime soon. In fact, countries such as China have begun to expand their international broadcasting efforts over the past decade.¹⁶² Even during the current coronavirus pandemic, international broadcasters such as the BBC are seeing their “highest ever global audience.”¹⁶³ As information and communication technologies continue to expand and take on a greater role in human life, so too will government interventions within the information space. At present, international broadcasting is among the most prevalent forms of such intervention and both scholars and policymakers must continue to keep an eye on these developments.

As this thesis has shown, international broadcasters such as Germany’s Deutsche Welle and Russia’s Sputnik News are instrumental in framing the news to further their respective country’s public diplomacy efforts and inform the global public of their positions on international events. In examining the reporting of these broadcasters on the 2016 pro-democracy Colorful Revolution protests in Macedonia this research uncovered unique findings about how DW and SN frame the news. Overall, both broadcasters framed the protests in Macedonia in line with their respective country’s foreign policy stance toward the situation.

Germany and DW viewed and framed the protests as part of a domestic crisis revolving around the rule of law and state of democracy in Macedonia. As such, through

¹⁶² Anne Nelson, “CCTV’s International Expansion: China’s Grand Strategy for Media” (Center for International Media Assistance, October 22, 2013), <https://www.cima.ned.org/resource/cctvs-international-expansion-chinas-grand-strategy-for-media/>; Merriden Varrall, “Behind the News: Inside China Global Television Network” (Lowy Institute, January 16, 2020), <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/behind-news-inside-china-global-television-network>.

¹⁶³ “BBC News Reaching Highest Ever Global Audience,” *BBC News*, July 23, 2020, sec. World, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-53517025>.

the domestic crisis frame and rule of law frame in English and the divided country frame and rule of law frame in Macedonian, DW provided broadly favorable coverage of the protests, criticism of the ruling VMRO-DPMNE government, and support for the Special Prosecutor's Office. Deutsche Welle also incorporated elements of its mission – reporting on youth and the economy in developing countries – into the presentation of the frames. Finally, Deutsche Welle provided limited space for opinion pieces and commentaries in both English and Macedonian reporting but did allow for more such news items in the Macedonian-language version. As such, the commentaries in Macedonian were more direct in favor of the protests and in their criticism of the government.

Russia's Sputnik News presented the protests in Macedonia as a crisis precipitated by foreign meddling and ethnic minorities to destabilize the country and overthrow the "constitutional" and "legitimate" government of VMRO-DPMNE. In this vein, Sputnik News in both English and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian utilized a foreign meddling frame, an ethnic conflict and destabilization frame, and a law and order frame. These frames covered the protests in an unfavorable light and attempted to present the protesters as tied to the opposition and foreign interests working in favor of the ethnic Albanian minority in Macedonia. It gave more favorable and positive coverage of both Macedonian president Ivanov and other VMRO-DPMNE officials in the country. However, unlike DW it focused on officials and did not offer favorable coverage of the government's counter-protest movement. Despite having the same three frames in both English and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian – the ethnic conflict and regional destabilization frame featured more prominently in the local language edition. This is likely due to the salience of these issues in Macedonia and the broader Balkan region when compared to foreign meddling or law and order. Finally, in terms of the opinion pieces, Sputnik News heavily relied on such texts to further the frames and used them more frequently than Deutsche Welle.

Additionally, Sputnik News maintained anonymity in many of the opinion pieces in both English and BCS. No author was listed for the articles thus making their claims (often extreme) unattributable.

These findings are unique in that both international broadcasters not only further presented their views and public diplomacy efforts through these frames, but in both English and the local languages were cognizant of the salience of certain issues. Deutsche Welle effectively grabbed onto the fact that the Special Prosecutor's Office and concerns about the rule of law were a high priority for many protesters and international observers. Similarly, Sputnik News effectively caught on to the VMRO-DPMNE government's law and order discourse and their supporters' concerns around ethnic minority issues as well as purported foreign interference.

The results of this research can serve to guide future scholarly work on framing, international broadcasting and public diplomacy, as well as Macedonia and the broader Balkan region. Further research in the field should use these findings and explore the other aspects of framing theory – frame production and framing effects. Scholars may conduct interviews with journalists and others within Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News to explore the internal process of the creation of the frames. Similarly, research on how these frames were understood by the audience (i.e. the effect of the frames) is another avenue for future research. Furthermore, despite the growth and interdisciplinary nature of the framing field – not much research has focused on framing by state-owned international broadcasters. This research should be expanded as it provides a unique avenue to explore how frames are created in news organizations that are also part of a state's overall foreign policy efforts.

This is also important for policymakers. The increasing policy discussions surrounding issues such as disinformation and the news media have overwhelmingly focused on the malign attempts of state-owned international broadcasters to push certain

narratives. However, not much discussion has taken place on how these institutions should continue to operate in the 21st century and if in fact they can be used to deter disinformation and uphold journalistic standards. Government agencies dealing with such institutions – from the U.S. Agency for Global Media to European institutions managing networks such as Euronews and Poland’s Belsat – must be aware of what role these institutions can play in framing the news. Ultimately, as with private media, they are part of the social construction of reality and can be effective tools for public diplomacy rather than pejoratively seen as propaganda weapons.

Finally, research on protests and framing overwhelmingly explores these issues from a social movement perspective, but not from a media and communication studies angle. Exploring protests, media, and framing in this way could lead to further fruitful studies. Furthermore, regional case studies exploring news framing in Macedonia, the Balkans, and the broader region of Central and Eastern Europe are limited and should be deepened – particularly analyzing local news organizations. Cross regional case studies focusing on understudied regions such as the Balkans afford both scholars and policymakers new insights into the functioning of the news media. These are avenues for exciting new research and should be taken advantage of as we seek to understand the impact of the news media on our daily lives.

Appendix – List of Deutsche Welle and Sputnik News Articles Reviewed

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AFP, AP, Reuters. “Scandal-hit Gruevski seeks comeback in Macedonia election.” *DW News*, December 11, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/en/scandal-hit-gruevski-seeks-comeback-in-macedonia-election/a-36724981>

AFP, dpa, Reuters. “Macedonian president stands by wiretapping pardons.” *DW News*, April 15, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/en/macedonian-president-stands-by-wiretapping-pardons/a-19192221>

AP, AFP, dpa, Reuters. “Macedonia's President Ivanov revokes all pardons in wiretap scandal.” *DW News*, June 6, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/en/macedonias-president-ivanov-revokes-all-pardons-in-wiretap-scandal/a-19310761>

AP, Reuters. “Macedonia parties agree on election date in December.” *DW News*, August 31, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/en/macedonia-parties-agree-on-election-date-in-december/a-19517204>

Blazevska, Katerina. “(Архива) Федерализација: Илузија преку која Груевски си бара спас [(Archive) Federalization: an illusion through which Gruevski seeks salvation].” *DW News*, December 6, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-36500239>

Blazevska, Katerina. “eCo „Шарена коалиција“ против „Шарената диктатура“ [With the “Colorful Coalition” against the “Colorful Dictatorship”].” *DW News*, October 3, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mka-35945640>

Blazevska, Katerina. “Арсим Зеколи: Над Македонија е надвиснат политички, економски и медиумски Левијатан! [Arsim Zekolli: Above Macedonia hangs a political, economic, and media Leviathan].” *DW News*, June 22, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19347009>

Blazevska, Katerina. “Буре барут се тркала од македонските изборни резултати [A barrel of gunpowder rolls out after the Macedonian election results].” *DW News*, December 14, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-36759345>

Blazevska, Katerina. “Бурна ноќ во Скопје: Едни кршеа со камења, други со пендреци [A stormy night in Skopje: Some smashed with stones, others with batons].” *DW News*, April 13, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19185277>

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Blazevska, Katerina. “ВМРО-ДПМНЕ е победник на изборите со 51 мандат [VMRO-DPMNE is the winner of the elections with 51 seats].” *DW News*, December 12, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-36744654>

Blazevska, Katerina. “Гордан Калајџиев на информативен разговор во полиција [Gordan Kalajdziev on an informational discussion with police].” *DW News*, May 23, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19276625>

Blazevska, Katerina. “Два протеста на улица и еден во ДИК [Two street protests and one at the SEC (State Election Commission)].” *DW News*, April 15, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19192411>

Blazevska, Katerina. “Две обвиненија од СЈО, двојно повеќе од власта [Two charges from the SPO, twice as many from the government].” *DW News*, September 16, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19555963>

Blazevska, Katerina. “Ден на протести: Македонија влегува во „жолта“ политичка фаза [Day of protests: Macedonia enters the "yellow" political phase].” *DW News*, June 20, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19342059>

Blazevska, Katerina. “ДИК и Вељаноски пред одлука: отпис или потпис за изборите? [SEC and Veljanoski before a decision: write-off or signature for the elections?].” *DW News*, April, 15, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19190241>

Blazevska, Katerina. “Законот за помилување како тезга за самопослужување [The pardon law as a self-service stall].” *DW News*, May 20, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19269835>

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Blazevska, Katerina. “Калајџиев казнет со 50 евра за фрлање боја [Kalajdziev fined 50 euros for throwing paint].” *DW News*, May 23, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19277150>

Blazevska, Katerina. “Македонија на нозе, режимот на колена [Macedonia on its feet, the regime on its knees].” *DW News*, April 18, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19197289>

Blazevska, Katerina. “Одлуката на Иванов била детално договорана? [Ivanov's decision was agreed in detail?].” *DW News*, April 13, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19182899>

Blazevska, Katerina. “Опозицијата протестира, власта се консолидира [The opposition protests, the government consolidates].” *DW News*, June 28, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19361376>

Blazevska, Katerina. “Пет години од убиството на Нешковски: казна за сите злосторници! [Five years after Neskovski's murder: punishment for all criminals].” *DW News*, June 6, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19308526>

Blazevska, Katerina. “Прометеј врзан, државата окована, кризата во слободен лет [Prometheus tied, the state chained, the crisis in free flight].” *DW News*, June 21, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19344843>

Blazevska, Katerina. “Протестите - слика за поделена Македонија [The protests - a picture of a divided Macedonia].” *DW News*, April 14, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19189965>

Blazevska, Katerina. “Стотици дланки ставија „потпис“ на шарената револуција [Hundreds of hands have "signed" the Colorful Revolution].” *DW News*, April 21, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19206793>

Blazevska, Katerina. “УКИМ веднаш да реагира против тепањето студенти! [UKIM must immediately react against the beating of students!].” *DW News*, July 1, 2016. <https://www.dw.com/mk/a-19370534>

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